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84  
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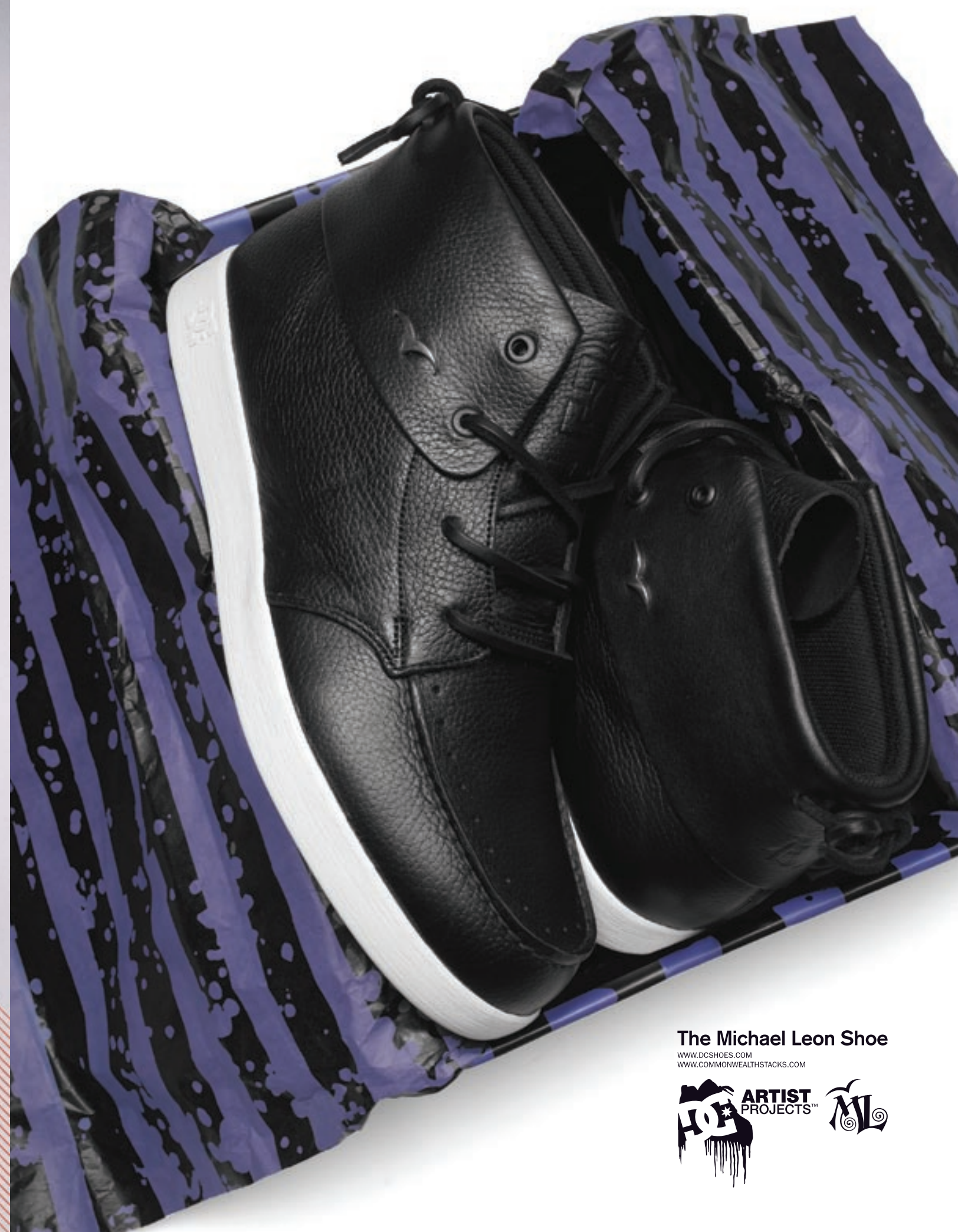




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ED'S RANT RAW POWER



Seven years after That Girl Mona, Vivian and Kit Clayton tear up the dancefloor. (PHOTO Lyndsay Siegel)

In 1997, techno producer Kit Clayton and his roommates—who, at the time, included such future superstars as Tigerbeat 6/ Musork graphic designer Nathaniel Hamon, Knitting Factory/ Trans Am engineer Paul Manley and indie video director Ruben Fleischer—threw a party in San Francisco called That Girl Mona. They named the event after a prostitute, rented a dark, low-ceilinged warehouse, and flew ghetto house DJs Funk, Milton and Deon out from Chicago. To this date, it's one of the best parties I have ever been to, as it represented what I felt house music should be, but rarely ever was for me: dirty, raw-sounding, sexual and driving. (Don't believe me? Check the *Ghetto Tracks* movie at [www.ruben.fm/shortfilms.html](http://www.ruben.fm/shortfilms.html).)

In the seven years since, I have often checked in with four-on-the-floor only to find it dominated by tinkling keys, so-called “soulful” hooks, and high production values—and barely a naughty bassline in sight. It often seemed like house had become the *de facto* soundtrack to high-end cocktail parties, rather than the liberating body music it had been designed as. Even Chicago stalwarts like Paul Johnson and Derrick Carter—so known for their thumping, era-defining sets—seemed to always be playing it safe at out-of-town gigs.

2004 really restored my faith, though. At Coco Machete's party at NYC's Sullivan Room, Lance Desardi (Land Shark) threw down a set of wildly synthetic house capped off with superbly mixed '80s funk. Germany's DJ T., M.A.N.D.Y. and Booka Shade from the Get Physical label channeled disco ghosts with sets full of glittering, nostalgic fist-pumpers at the Amsterdam Dance Event. Throwing retro out the window, two singles from Munich's Munk—"Kick Out The Chairs" and "Mein Schatzi"—smudged genre lines with '70s rock basslines, drum machine kicks and idiosyncratic vocal turns from James Murphy and Princess Superstar, respectively.

And then there's Mu. Her performance at the Output event at CMJ was a revelation: Maurice Fulton's new-school jack trax meets out-there performance art, with Mutsumi leaping around the stage, making animal noises, pulling hair and leading the crowd on to the strains of a song about Paris Hilton's sex tape. This bodes well for 2005, and if upcoming releases are any indication, house and house hybrids will continue to cause a strong stirring in our loins throughout the year.

As you may have guessed, I prefer my music full of raw attitude, and this issue certainly fits the bill. Dancehall firebrand Capleton is one of the few personalities who can dabble in both slackness and spirituality, possessing a fierce voice that flows over the most incendiary rhythms. Speaking of rhythms, London-based M.I.A. has got them on lock, presenting urban beats and rhymes whose bounce transcends time and location. And Dälek doesn't really care if you're expecting them to do heady indie hip-hop, they're too busy listening to their My Bloody Valentine records.

So for issue #84, we raise our 25¢ PBRs in toast to the unpredictable, the rule-breakers and the future-forward thinkers who we expect to move us in 2005. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go find my copy of Milton's "Hit It From the Back."

—Vivian Host, Editor

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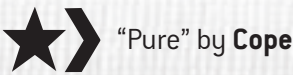
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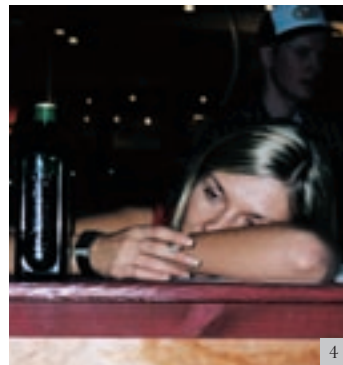
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3



4

### 1. SHAWN BRACKBILL

Shawn's work has probably appeared on a 7" single or CD you own, having photographed for D.C.'s Dischord, Get Hip and Birdman Records. In print he's rocked the lens for *Skyscraper*, *XLR8R*, *Rockpile*, *Jazztimes* and *Anthem*. But as if that wasn't enough, this new transplant to Philadelphia is working on a portrait project, as well as hopping in the van throughout Europe with art-punks Q and Not U. And for the future of this band-tastic aperture junkie? He hopes to simply direct his focus to doing some street photography.

### 2. MARK PYTLIK

Toronto native Mark Pytlik has written about music for Pitchfork Media, *The National Post*, *Eye Magazine*, Allmusic.com and more. He is also the author of 2002's Björk biography *Wow & Flutter*. Thanks to his French Canadian mother and European father's unholy union, he resides in the little known Polish-Metis mutt bracket, where it is very lonely indeed. His current obsessions include M.I.A., French house, Hidden Agenda and Snoop Dogg's "Drop It Like It's Hot."

### 3. MAY TRUONG

When she's not trying diligently to protect the endangered northern penguin, May Truong enjoys the hectic lifestyle of a jetsetting photographer. She was born to a kung fu fighting dad and that is where she acquired all her skills: nunchuck skills, bowhunting skills and computer hacking skills. The camera stuff she figured out herself.

### 4. SARAH BENTLEY

Sarah started her career in the fashion cupboard at *Dazed and Confused* (trendy London magazine) before realizing her love affair was with music as opposed to shoes. She then undertook the role of editorial assistant at *Sleazation* magazine before ironically becoming the fashion editor at both *Jockey Slut* magazine and *Adrenalin* magazine. Whilst dabbling in fashion, Sarah maintained her love for music by making regular contributions to *The Fader*, *Touch*, *Trace*, *Lodown* and *Knowledge*, her passion being reggae, dancehall and any underground UK music scenes with a vibe.

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HOW CAN I BE DOWN?

I just read your article on “Libretto” (#82). I too am an “emcee” from the Portland area (originally from California). After reading your article, I began to think to myself, “How did this guy manage to get himself featured in the magazine?” Everything you said about Portland in the article is true. I have been the beneficiary and victim of Portland’s hip-hop scene many times. I have been in Portland since ’96 and seen a lot of groups come and go. I run in the same circles as the few people who have made a name for themselves here. My face and material is famil-

iar to such people as the Lifesavas, Cool Nutz, Starchile, and DJ O.G. One. My crew had paid its dues! We’ve even had Jumbo [the Garbage man, Lifesavas MC] be a judge for us when we threw MC battles here. My crew is on local radio at least three times a week on several different stations. We even co-host a weekly hip-hop show on KBOO 90.7 FM.

Yet, for all our efforts and local fame, we have not managed to be the topic of a magazine article. How did Libretto make that opportunity for himself? Not that he doesn’t deserve it, but if you ask 10 hip-hoppers here in Portland, they would recognize the name Theurgy before they would recognize the name Libretto. I must say that Libretto is humble. We just did a show with him about two weeks ago, and he didn’t mention the upcoming article.

BTW—it was well-written and interesting (but too short). If you are interested in speaking with me, please contact me. I promise to be funny and worth your time.

If you are not interested in me or my crew, I’d appreciate it if you would satisfy my curiosity. How did Libretto get in your magazine? *Portland hip-hopper Cheston Dooley, a.k.a V!RTU (The Hip Hop Anchor)*

**Julianne Shepherd responds:**  
Hey Cheston,  
Thanks for writing, and I’m glad you liked the article. The answer is pretty simple: I have seen Libretto perform numerous times and am a fan, and I wanted to write about him in the context of Portland. Generally the magazine world runs features that are timely and topical, and Libretto’s feature happened to coincide with his national album

release so that helped, too. I’d love to hear your crew—please get in touch at [julianneshepherd@yahoo.com](mailto:julianneshepherd@yahoo.com).

**INVISIBLE INK**  
Hi Tomas,  
My name is Umar. I read *XLR8R* mag a lot. I think it’s a great representation of music and the arts these days. I don’t have a subscription, but I always purchase the new issue when it comes out. Anyway, I just read your column in the new issue: “Ed’s Rant: Invisible Beauty” (#82). It was amazing. I got the shivers reading it. I only get the shivers when music moves me; I’ve never ever gotten it from reading. I am very glad that the right people work at *XLR8R*. I know this might sound cheese but...keep up the good work. Cheers.  
*Umar, [www.ddpesh.com](http://www.ddpesh.com)*

**Tomas responds:**  
Dude, thanks for the words and kindness. I can see by your dope website that you’re part of the invisible beauty I was referring to in my rant. Keep up the cool music and design you’re doing!

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**  
Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to [letters@xlr8r.com](mailto:letters@xlr8r.com) or send mail to *XLR8R Magazine* 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117. All letters printed “as is.”

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If you’re goin’ places and taking along your freak flag, *XLR8R*’s got just the contest for you oddballs. Winners will be eligible for great prizes from our friends at **Jansport**, who have an amazing new line of large travel-ready duffels, suitable for adventure travel or taking your life off the grid for a few years! Additionally, you might win a new CD from our cover star **Mu**. Her new album, *Out Of Breach (Manchester’s Revenge)* (Output), is a triumph of freaked out vocals, seriously funky basslines and some of the most brilliantly warped music ever made. We’ll even throw in a few changes of t-shirts for your lazy ass, courtesy of stylish SF designers, **Exact-Science**.

Free stuff galore kids—and all we’re asking is for you to email or write us a story about your craziest real-life trip. Did you bungee jump in the Grand Canyon? Eat barbecued snake for breakfast in Guangdong Province? Submit a one paragraph travel story and you could win one of the following prizes.

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- One Grand Prize Winner** will receive a **Jansport Modus 30” Footlocker Roller Duffel** in anarchy green. This duffel has serious packing capacity with laid-back looks.
- One First Prize Winner** will receive a **Jansport Modus Sport Duffel**. From the airports to the gym and back again, this duffel will make life simple.
- 10 Runners-Up** will receive Mu’s fantastic new CD *Out Of Breach (Manchester’s Revenge)* on Output and t-shirts from Exact-Science.

Entries will be accepted via mail and email. Send your answers to *XLR8R*’s “On The Go” contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email them to [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with “On The Go” in the subject line. Include your name, return address and email address when you enter. Entries must be received by Monday, February 28, 2005.



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Adulthood can be so tiresome, what with all the bill paying and having to wait in line at the post office...and let's not even talk about the wanton sex and binge drinking! Therefore it's no surprise that regressing to childhood is such a popular pastime. Though you make think that acting like a primary schooler went out with the rave scene, it didn't. Here are Bitter Bastard's top 10 childhood regression hobbies of the moment.

**1. Dodgeball tournaments** This was the hot hipster/industry thing to do in New York last summer. Not surprisingly, everyone looked like the kind of kids who always got picked last for dodgeball in fifth grade. But hey, any excuse to wear the short running shorts and knee-high socks that we always tried to *get out of* wearing in P.E. Next up: a Butts Up/7-Up revival.

**2. Blogging** Dear Diary, today I totally dissected the ethno-queer underpinnings of the new Eminem CD, then I spent four hours in front of the computer in my pajama pants arguing on message boards about Le Tigre and the capitalist patriarchy. I feel sooo productive! <3

**3. Dance performances** I was at a loft party recently when four women got up, dressed like cheerleaders, and did a booty dance performance to Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Baby Got Back." The electroclash scene has made these sort of *de facto* '80s dance extravaganzas acceptable, but we still associate them with the popular girls from high school who are now fat and shop at Forever 21. Sorry, we just do.

**4. Sticker collecting/fetishizing** First it was graffiti. Then it was stencils. Now, it's stickers. They've become the kinder, gentler way to collect street art. Wait...does anyone really want street art to be kinder and gentler?

**5. Coloring clubs** Coloring clubs are the new dodgeball for winter. Everyone goes to a bar and, um, colors. Hey, it sure beats getting laid. Plus, I love the taste of the burnt sienna crayon.

**6. Being into pirates** Dave Eggers is a monster. First we had to sit through his long-winded, tear-jerking book, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, and now he has foisted upon SF the McSweeney's Pirate Supply store, which makes already costume-happy Burning Man enthusiasts think that wearing striped socks, eyepatches and growling "Arrr!" all the time is charming.

**7. Obsessive videogaming** We have 20 male friends who always complain that they never get dates, but it's mostly because they spend too much time playing with their joysticks. Hey dude...if you're a 30-year-old guy and you're talking about cheat codes for *Halo 2*, that's the equivalent of spraying chick repellent all over yourself. Talking about *Street Fighter* is cool, though.

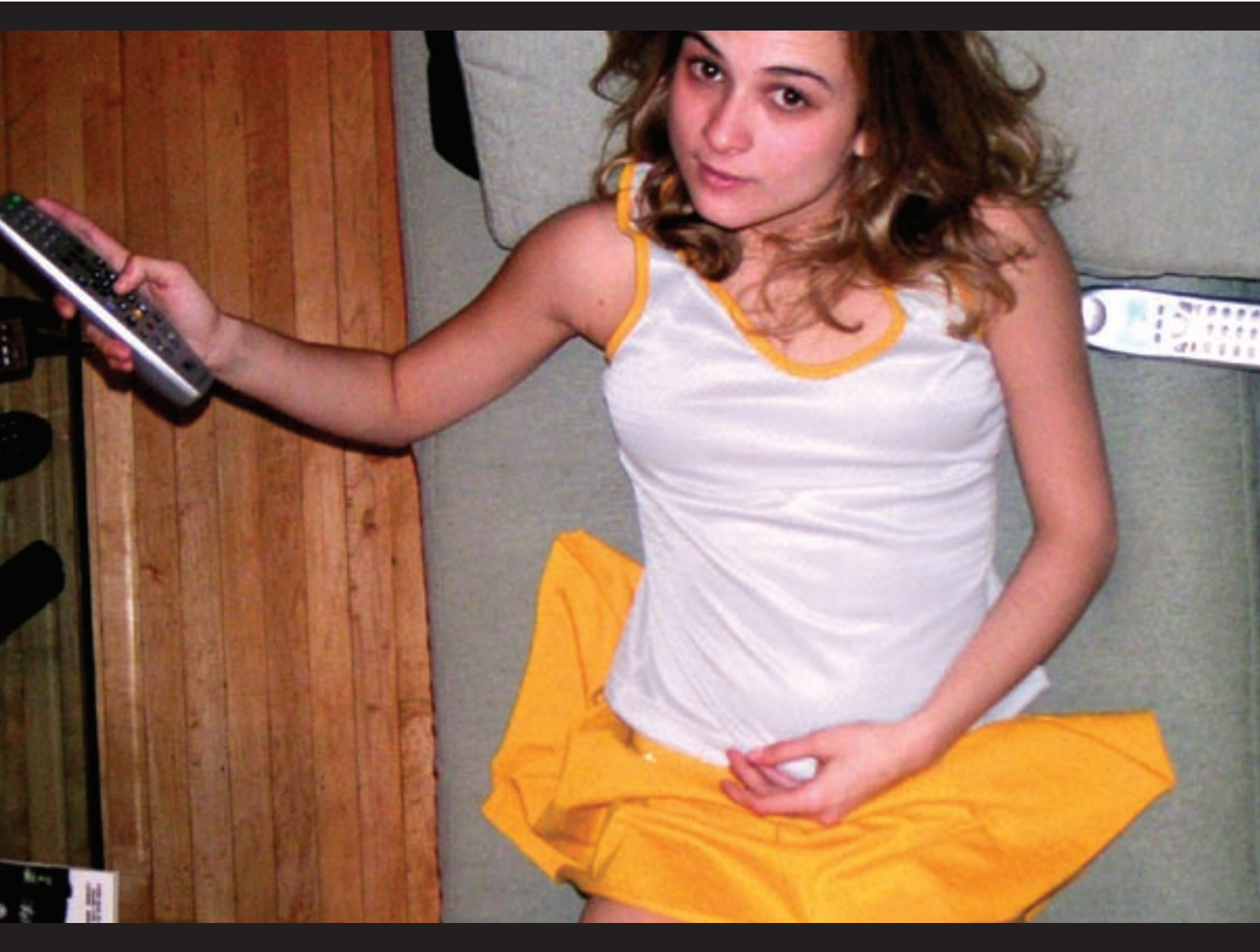
**8. Drinking cough syrup** Dirty South rap has brought back this subversive junior high activity. It ties with gravity bong for best nostalgic vice, but beware the hangovers caused by both.

**9. Slumber parties** Adult slumber parties are weird. If you fall asleep first, your friends don't freeze your bra or put your hand in warm water—they take incriminating photos of you to put on the internet and steal Vicodin from your purse. Also, the line between a co-ed adult slumber party and a full-on orgy is, like, a pinstripe.

**10. Calling people "douchebag"** The best retro slang term that has come back into vogue. The only noun that perfectly describes guys who go out on Friday night and talk about buying life insurance with their bros.

# Research and Development at American Apparel

Meet 19-year-old Mallory Lorenzo from Ventura, California. Seen here at the end of a solid month of television watching, an intense research and development program sponsored by the American Apparel think tank.



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# HENRIK SCHWARZ

BERLIN'S MINIMAL MUSIC  
MAN GOES GLOBAL.  
WORDS: DAVE STENTON PHOTO: SHANA MCCULLOUGH

"I came out of this small world in southern Germany where I always had the feeling I was a freak," says Henrik Schwarz. "When I came to Berlin, I realized I wasn't—I met many people who were determined to do their own thing."

Known for his sparkling and taut minimal house productions and remixes for artists including Jimpster and John Arnold, Henrik Schwarz moved to the German capital five years ago to pursue a career as a graphic designer, and his love affair with the city is showing no sign of abating. "Whenever you go out in the streets, you see something new, meet somebody new, or hear something new," he enthuses. "It's very inspiring."

The results of this inspiration are abundantly clear: Although his first release arrived less than two years ago, and his discography only comprises five 12"s and a handful of remixes, Schwarz is now mentioned in the same breath as Theo Parrish and Moodymann, and can count Gilles Peterson as one of his biggest fans. His live set at the recent Electric Souls party in Manchester, England was judged the highlight of the weekend-long event by many attendees.

Don't mistake this German for a new kid on the block, though. Schwarz began DJing in 1992 and made his first few tentative prods at bits of studio kit a couple of years after. "I'm quite slow when it comes to producing," he explains. "I like to let tracks lay there for a while and then

check later if they are good enough to be released." Although sluggish as a producer, Schwarz was much quicker when it came to incorporating computers into the art of DJing: "I got my first laptop in 1998—not that early but still a long time before Ableton Live or Final Scratch. It was difficult at the time because I used Cubase; with every click there was the danger of a system or software crash, but I liked the thrill."

Schwarz's set-up these days is little more than a Powerbook, but he's still taking chances when he performs. "Of course, there are some pre-worked parts," he proffers, "but I try to do as much as possible on the fly. I record every gig and, often, these recordings are the basis for new tracks."

Next year will see the first fruits of Schwarz's new, intriguingly-titled project: Henrik Schwarz and the Music Arkestra. His debut album is also penciled in for release on Mood Music, although, perhaps unsurprisingly, he "can't really say when it's going to be finished."

Henrik Schwarz's *Leave My Head Alone*, *Brain* is out now on Sunday Music. [www.supravisio.de](http://www.supravisio.de)





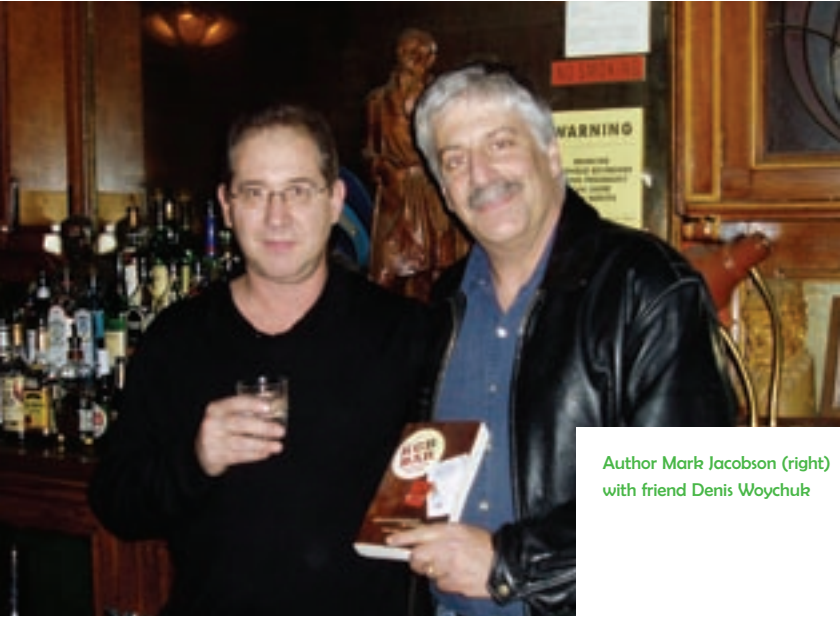
OBSSESSIONS:  
ANDREA PARKER  
ELECTRO DAME SAYS RUNNING IS HER GAME.

Electro-bass producer Andrea Parker has released music as Inky Blacknuss (with Alex Knight), Two Sandwiches Short Of A Lunchbox (with David Morley), Angular Art and under her own name, and has remixed and collaborated with the likes of Depeche Mode, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Mira Calix and Steve Reich. In 1996, she released the single “The Rocking Chair,” a breathtaking statement of intent that featured a 40-piece orchestra and the sampled sharpening of knife blades. A *DJ-Kicks* mix CD pitching her own compositions and remixes alongside hip-hop and electro from Dr. Octagon, Gescom and Dopplereffekt preceded the 1999 Mo’ Wax release of her debut album, *Kiss My Arp*. Parker now curates (and records for) Touchin’ Bass, a booty bass/electro imprint for whom lyrics like “*Bounce that ass/Bounce that ass/Bounce that ass/Shake your tits/Shake your tits/Shake your tits*” are typical. She has just compiled *Nobody’s Perfect*, a mix CD drawing on the label’s first 10 releases. Here, Parker shares with us how she keeps the junk in her trunk in shape. *David Hemingway*

ANDREA PARKER ON RUNNING

“I got into running about two years ago. I had a collapsed lung and had to get it back into shape, which meant no more smoking! Being in studios and clubs all the time, it’s nice to be outside in the fresh air. I’ve turned into one of those people I used to hate: an ‘outdoor enthusiast.’ I run in parks, forests and beaches—anywhere away from it all. I always run early in the morning when there’s no one around. I like the headspace—it sets me up for the day. Running wakes me up and puts me in a positive frame of mind to listen to artists’ demos for Touchin’ Bass. There’s not a relationship between my running and my own music but I love listening to other people’s music in my headphones and going off running in the middle of nowhere. Do I have to be in a particular mood to run? Not really, I just run when I want to. The only time it’s difficult is when I’ve been out with Jack Daniels the night before. I do a lot of running for charity, like the Cancer Research Leeds Castle 10K Run or the Feel Fine 10K in London. The next charity run is going to be up Ben Nevis, a mountain in Scotland. There’s lots of hill training, where you find muscles in your arse you never knew you had.”

BOOK REVIEW:  
COMMIE COMMENTARIES  
CELEBRITY AUTHORS UNEARTH DARK STORIES.



Author Mark Jacobson (right)  
with friend Denis Woychuk

Walk into the KGB Bar on East 4th Street and Second Avenue in New York’s Lower East Side on the first Wednesday of the month and you might find Fab 5 Freddy talking about hip-hop in the slums of Brazil or *Punk Magazine*’s Legs McNeil waxing poetic about ‘50s and ‘60s nudie flicks. You’ll have discovered Marc Jacobson’s nonfiction reading series, one of the most edgy and entertaining literary salons of its kind. The series’ featured authors—such as avant-garde pianist Matthew Shipp, writer Luc Sante, and music executive Danny Goldberg—are often eclipsed by the shocking and enlightening subject matter they deliver. Compiled in the new anthology, *The KGB Nonfiction Reader* (paperback; Nation Books, \$16.95), topics ranging from murder in Cape Cod to narcoquerrillas in Colombian jungles to scavenging rare auto parts or testing female Viagra are covered in digestible short vignettes. In an engrossing piece on train-hoppers, Lucias Shepard introduces us to the world of the FTRA (Freight Train Riders of America), a psychopathic pseudo-gang of railway survivalists. The essay reveals details about an invisible world underneath our noses, while viewing American values, class divisions and addictions through the lens of one of the nation’s oldest industrial infrastructures. *KGB* is a collection of stories that dares you to put it down. *Tomas Palermo*

www.nationbooks.org



**BOOM BIP**  
*Blue Eyed In The Red Room*  
The sequel to *Seed to Sun*. An album of organic and electronic instrumental productions and songs with Nina Nastasia and Gruff Rhys from The Super Furry Animals. Out February 8th on Lex Records. 2LP, CD and special limited edition CD with bonus disc. [www.boom-bip.com](http://www.boom-bip.com)



**BIG POOH**  
*Sleepers*  
6 Hole Records presents the debut album from Little Brother member, Big Pooh, titled *Sleepers*. Big Pooh follows the success of Little Brother, with his soon to be classic debut. Featuring production from 9th Wonder (Jay-Z (The Black Album), Destiny's Child, and Nas). Appearances from Little Brother's Phonte, Murs, and others.



**DÄLEK**  
*Absence*  
If only Hip Hop aged like wine - where Public Enemy sampling Slayer while spitting lyrics for the "Permanent Underclass" had informed and challenged younger artists who were socially conscious and musically aware then maybe in 2005 Dälek wouldn't seem so out of place.



**HOMELESS DERILEX**  
*Hd's Vs. Sp-12*  
Brand new LP from Bay Area duo, Homeless Derilex. Consisting of members Architect & Grand Tha Visitor. *HD's vs.The SP-1200* takes listeners on a nostalgic trip down memory lane bringing back the feel of jazz influenced tracks, heavy basslines and hard snares. All tracks produced by Architect. Don't miss out on this one.



**FRANCOIS K.**  
*Deep Space NYC V.1*  
A dubbed-out collection featuring Mutabaruka, The Skatalites, U-Roy, Chicken Lips, Carl Craig, Jeff Mills and more.



**MU**  
*Out Of Breach (Manchester's Revenge)*  
Mu is renowned US-house producer, Maurice Fulton and his wife, Mutsumi. Building off the buzz of their first record *Afro Finger And Gel*, Mu picks right up with their new release, *Out of Breach (Manchester's Revenge)* which has spawned the underground anthem in the making "Paris Hilton". This release perfectly encapsulates the twisted genius of Mu!



**MUNK**  
*Aperitivo*  
Part of the exploding Post Punk-Funk Scene, Munk didn't want *Aperitivo* to be one of those straightforward, dance CDs with one beat and one mood. Their intention was to make an album that includes various atmospheres and musical influences. The sound ranges somewhere between club and listening, connecting live band and samplers, inspired by Disco, House, and Hip Hop culture.



**GENERAL PATTON VS. X-ECUTIONERS**  
*s/t*  
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**TIEFSCHWARTZ**  
*Misch Masch*  
First US release from highly successful dance artists, Tiefschwarz. The boys from Berlin bring a double CD, *Misch Masch*. The first disc consisting of a mix album, while latter brings together pretty much all their remixes of recent times, many available for the first time. The forerunners of the post-punk genre show why they were the dance music stars of 2004.



**MIA DOI TODD**  
*Manzanita*  
On her fifth album, Mia continues to grow as an artist and a songwriter with her angelic voice, Joni Mitchell-esque storytelling, and Nick Drake-esque melodies. "Like a 21st Century Yeats she transforms our species' dilemmas, follies, and misery into cathartic beauty. In this time of relentless ugliness, we need Mia Doi Todd." - LA Weekly (In Stores Feb. 8)



**TRUBY TRIO**  
*Retreated*  
Amalgamating different flavours like brazil, latin, boogie, tech-house, electro, drums & bass and even disco, had led to the guys being the inventors of a wholly new dance genre. Truby Trio brings us their double cd *Retreated*. Disc 1 brings us the idea of compiling and releasing remixes that were only available on vinyl, up until now. Disc 2 features remixes by Louie Vega, Tiefschwarz, Senior Coconut, Gucciman, Nickdemus, and others.



**Various Artists**  
*MAX GLAZER PRESENTS: DANCEHALL CLASSICS*  
Well known dancehall DJ and producer, Max Glazer of Federation Sound mixes the best in Dancehall Classics for Sequence Records. This record which is available on CD and double vinyl represents the best in dancehall tunes from the early and mid-nineties. From the booty shaking "Wicked in Bed" to the crooning of Barrington Levy in "Here I Come", Dancehall Classics will surely become a favorite in your collection. The double vinyl album is un-mixed!!



# DVID: DOUBLE DARE

## CABARET VOLTAIRE VIDEOS ENVISIONED 2004 WAY BACK IN 1982.

While every post-punker worth their Arthur Russell records knows that Cabaret Voltaire made the world safe for electronic noise rock, few know that the band was also laying a lo-fi blueprint for future video heroes like Shynola and Chris Cunningham. On *Double Vision Presents Cabaret Voltaire* (Mute; \$19.99), grainy found-video and color-manipulated performance footage fight for visual control while the sound of Sheffield's finest matches the frantic, repetitive imagery. Presented as an 85-minute long-form video and encompassing 14 of CB's tracks, the music predictably stands the test of time far better than the imagery, which has been unflinchingly aped by art-school tools since its original release in 1982. However, as a document of one of the most influential acts in electronic music, it's required viewing. *Stephen Christian*

www.mute.com



# NEXT BIG THING: KHONNOR

## A TEENAGE PRODUCER WHO HATES GENRES BUT LOVES OYSTERS

Evidently, not all 17-year-olds are hopelessly hopping round the sprawling strip malls of America listening to Britney/Timberlake/Diddy on their Pocket Rock. Just ask Vermont's Khonnor, responsible for the arresting audio amalgam *Handwriting*, where folk fragments, nocturne pop vocals and Klaus Schulze synthery get coated in a glitchy sheen that would make Fennesz weep. *Uh-oh*, here comes the "folktronica" tag, as Khonnor suspiciously notes: "Now that it's being pigeonholed as a genre that I have no interest in, I feel even more [awkward]. In today's day and age, *one can't use guitar, vocals and computer to produce music without being labeled as 'donkey-death-squad-ice-cream-magnet-be-bop-crunch-step'* or something." Best let that label go as Khonnor mounts a collaborative project with Ilkae that he promises "will be quite a change from *Handwriting*, which is, at its heart, a reaction to the oyster mating process." *Brion Paul*

*Handwriting* is out now on Type Records.  
www.khonnor.com, www.typerecords.com



# IN MEMORIAM: JOHN PEEEL

John Peel, the legendary British radio DJ who worked for the BBC for 37 years, died of a heart attack on October 26 while on vacation in Peru. Peel's shows featured an incredible variety of music: West African chants rubbed shoulders with Warp releases; garage rock acts followed perennial Peel favorites, such as The Fall. His support of electronic music was especially impressive. If Richie Hawtin, or Jeff Mills visited the UK, it was Peel's show—not influential dance tastemaker Pete Tong's—for whom they recorded sets; similarly, the commercially released Peel Sessions provided many with their first exposure to then fledgling artists such as Orbital, Boards of Canada and The Orb. It is impossible to demonstrate Peel's importance in a few short sentences. His close friend and fellow DJ Andy Kershaw, writing in UK newspaper *The Independent*, perhaps came closest: "Peel was the most important figure in British music since the birth of rock 'n' roll. Full stop." *Dave Stenton*



installations and films, along with glitch techno and Playstation 2 soundtracks. Her fever for combining audio and video began when she started shooting and soundtracking underground films. She was later involved in San Francisco's noise and laptop techno scenes before enrolling at the California Institute for the Arts. In 2001, Kuhne chiseled electro-industrial noise for her debut album, *Seismic*, which was released on her label, Tektonic Shift.

Kuhne's latest album, *Thin Air*, derives from noise loops that were triggered when she manipulated geometric objects and colors on screen. It's a project inspired by a day job editing dialogue and composing music for preteen girl videogames by Purple Moon. "My whole idea of aural and visual feedback began by working with spatialized audio games," explains Kuhne. "You're basically learning more about certain subject matters on an unconscious level through audio triggers."

"No matter what I create, I always have a narrative story going on in my mind," she continues. The narratives of *Scan*, for example, stemmed from witnessing how composer/sound-poet Chris Mann's hands articulated his words during an interview. "His hand gestures were just so eloquent and musical (by) themselves," she avers. Kuhne is planning to release her *Scan* films on DVD, along with a processed-guitar album and more sensor-based installations.

In the meantime, Kuhne encourages sensory overload. In fact, she sees no harm in the pandemic of deficient attention spans caused by MTV and raver visuals' two-second videoclips. "I see it as a natural evolution," she says. "I see it as a way to speed up our synapses...my mind actually works a lot faster than it used to."

*Thin Air* (Tektonic Shift-Current) is out now. Excerpts from *Scan: Series* and Kadet's other installations are available at [www.tektonicshift.com](http://www.tektonicshift.com).

# KADET

## AUDIOVISUAL SURREALIST

### KADET CONCOCTS SOUNDS THAT WATCH YOU.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD IMAGE: REBECCA HOBBS

It's easy to know that the couple is bickering without hearing them speak or even seeing their faces. The camera only focuses on their hand gestures. Every time the hands move they produce a static sound that abruptly mutates into metal cutting through air. Close your eyes and you'll hear a conversation going nowhere.

That was Kadet Kuhne's short film, *A Couple*, from her *Scan: Series* installation. The video footage was scanned through a computer that then exhaled incidental music from the couple's hands. And then there's *Holding Pattern I: Synaptic*. If you stand close enough to its monitor it displays your distorted image; then an infrared sensor kicks in and suddenly blips of noise sprinkle whenever you move. Be aware: This is music that takes notes on you.

"One of my aims is to transport the listener into an altered state, but with a consciousness that there is technology present," says the LA-based Kuhne (who records as Kadet). For over a decade, she has constructed such gripping





ROMANOWSKI  
IN THE ART STUDIO OR RECORDING  
STUDIO, ROMANOWSKI HAS  
SOME SERIOUS FUN  
WORDS: JONATHAN ZWICKEL PHOTO: ROBIN RUSSELL

There’s nothing funny about Romanowski. So what if his latest Future Primitive Sound release is titled *Party in My Pants*? Who cares if the album flows from rotgut raunch rock to sangria-smooth Latinismo in the wink of an eye? If there’s humor in the music, it’s for a reason. If you find his devious sonic collisions playful, it’s because they are. But sit down with the charismatic DJ/producer/visual artist and you’ll understand the sober, sincere intention that underlies his Looney Tunes world party.

“[The loose music I make] is not for novelty,” he says. “It’s really just a straight-up choice. The more we create boxes for things the more they tend to separate. Instead, I’m trying to say all these styles relate.” Many musicians have tried to evoke universal themes through their work, but few do it with more creativity—and more integrity—than Romanowski.

Born in Basel, Switzerland, Romanowski grew up amidst a swirl of cultural influences and his mom’s expansive record collection. At 18 years old his thirst for fresh sounds pulled him to San Francisco; over the next decade Romanowski grew into a fixture of the city’s nightlife and developed a reputation as one of its funkier pillars. His DJ sets, mixtapes and 3-D art installations became legendary in the Bay Area underground, and soon he was playing the original Future Primitive Sound Sessions, headlining his own monthly throwdowns, and collaborating with like-minded b-boy visionaries like Greg “Pnut” Galinsky and Doze Green.

More recently, this past spring saw the release of *Steady Rockin’*, Romanowski’s heady ode to the

Jamaican roots music that serves as his prime inspiration. His uncanny blend of crisp live instrumentation and dusty, hard-skanking beats taps the soulful vein that runs from Kingston to Brooklyn. “I wanted to do that rocksteady stuff because that’s what I felt pushed in a different direction,” he says. “Not that I was totally creating something new, but I think the freshness was needed.” As the bugged-out follow-up, *Pants* is the second installment of a trilogy Romanowski conceived of long ago. “I’m always, like, six albums ahead of myself,” he says, and you can almost hear the wheels turning in his head.

They must be on overdrive: Romanowski’s finally getting deserved recognition from all corners. Tours of Japan and Australia are in the works, as well as his Public Relations project with Freestyle Fellowship’s P.E.A.C.E., and another outlet called OCB with Jan Whitefield of Poets of Rhythm. Fortunately for his fans, Romanowski’s infectious humor balances his more lofty artistic goals. “If I would smoke less weed and strive more to be a star, that’d all be done a long time ago,” he says with a knowing grin. “But, you know, I don’t.”

www.futureprimitivesound.com

# AMON TOWIN

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PARTY ON  
XLR8R REPORTS BACK FROM  
THE GLOBAL FESTIVAL CIRCUIT.



LA FREEWAVES FESTIVAL

If it seems like art that embraces thought, feeling and dissent is being pushed out of Stateside public life, events like Los Angeles' ninth annual Freewaves Festival—co-titled “How Can You Resist”—are sure to restore your faith. This year's festival focused on film, video and new media art that probed hot social issues with an eye on the theme of dissent.

While the 100-plus participating artists hail from every continent (save Antarctica), Freewaves keeps a strong Los Angeles flavor; a typical night featured Project Blowed members breaking and freestyling as the opening act for a slate of video works on immigrant labor issues. This year, the organizers wisely addressed the dissipated sprawl of previous events by concentrating the action in downtown LA.

“How Can You Resist”'s presentations ranged from a television pilot (*Inter-State*) depicting the lives of four local artists to billboards and websites that conveyed critical messages beyond the walls and operating hours of the galleries. Freewaves again succeeded at this crucial juncture, reminding Southern California of the vital role tangible and creative resistance plays in the culture. But with so many ties to LA's politically aware and vibrant music community, why not kick off next year's proceedings with a benefit concert? *Rob Geary*



CANDELA ARTS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

As dawn peeked papaya-orange over the horizon of Old San Juan, Puerto Rico on a Monday morning in mid-October, no one was sleepy. Almost impossible to believe after four days of traipsing through cobblestone streets, peppered with sporadic power naps in enveloping blankets of beach sand, every other moment spent inhaling the cultural smorgasbord afforded by the Candela Art and Music Festival.

Event producer Pablo Rodriguez hosted nightly soirees at various venues. Kicking things off on the opening Thursday, New York's Tyler Askew, Sean Holland and Neil Aline sparked the vibe at the Candela Bar. On Friday, aural delights from Garth Trinidad and Bobbito revived Don Pablo, a former punk hangout, with the speakers kicking salsa and hip-hop jams. Jephthe Guillaume started the Afro-Caribbean dancefloor Saturday at Rhumba, building up to the native Puerto Rican bomba music of Plerumbombazo, accentuated by a dizzying cast of conga players.

Later in the evening, Turntables on the Hudson's Nickodemus, DJ Language, Quantic and Karl Injex took it deep as New York tourists mixed with the San Juan scene back at the Candela Bar. Rich Medina steeped in the spirit as he dug into the depths of pan-African vinyl, closing the night.

And then there were the first-class visuals. The Candela Bar also houses a second-floor gallery, presenting a program (curated by Alithya Weingarten) of Skwerm and Doze's boldly adorned paintings, Shephard Fairey's wheat-paste poster art and Swoon's multi-dimensional installations. The art extended to the party at Rhumba with Montreal's HVMW8 collective composing an overnight mural. In essence, Old San Juan evenings provided an ideal setting for this third annual convergence, where artistic intoxications allowed likeminded individuals to revel in paradise found. *Tamara Warren*



AMSTERDAM DANCE EVENT

Now in its eighth year, the Amsterdam Dance Event—held October 21-23, 2004 at Felix Meritis hall in the heart of the Dutch capital city—continues to grow by leaps and bounds, turning the heads of industry professionals and punters alike. ADE is less comprehensive panel-wise than WMC and more industry-oriented than SONAR, but it nonetheless boasted a bevy of talent over its three days.

During the daytime, keynote speaker Karl Bartos of Kraftwerk connected the dots between music and mathematics, Funk D'Void deconstructed Final Scratch and Juan Atkins and DJ Bone talked techno. *XLR8R* contributor Philip Sherburne gave a riveting presentation on new developments in live laptop performance, and during the Demolition VIII panel, house luminary Paul Johnson listened to demos and gave feedback to the artists themselves on the spot. Quite an interesting take on the typically dry seminars that plague most music festivals, to say the very least.

Still, it was at myriad parties where ADE really shined. Highlights included Jamie Lidell's live show at the Warp showcase, DJ T. and M.A.N.D.Y. laying down back-to-back electro-house goodness at the Get Physical Records night, DJs from London's Rinse FM getting grimey in the basement of the Kindred Spirits Weekender and the free-flowing beer and good vibes at Rude Movements' in-store at the Rush Hour record shop.

Once we got over our respective hangovers, we managed to explore the city itself and discovered hot kicks and threads at Patta, rare records at Kids Love Wax, a crazy strain of weed called Super Crystal and the office-cum-gallery space of über-cool magazine *Baby*. *Max Haywood*



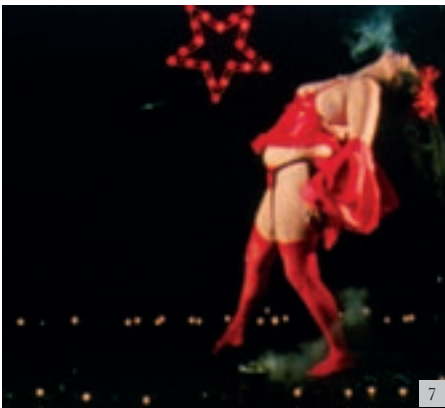
SONARSOUND TOKYO 2004

As super typhoon Ma On smeared itself into the Tokyo skyline, a condensed version of the influential Catalanian music festival returned for a second edition in Japan, just one month after a successful globetrotting intervention in São Paulo. The dent of Japan's most dangerous storm in nearly a decade was barely felt at the majestic Yebisu Garden Place in the Ebisu district, which hosted an international array of electronic music performers under the far reaching Sonar umbrella.

Along with the obligatory video, multimedia and technology showcases, *Sonarsound Tokyo* (October 9-10) gleefully displayed some of Japan's leading electronic artists alongside the likes of Akufen, Juan Atkins, Carl Craig, Schneider TM, Chicks on Speed, Opiate and T. Raumschmiere. The two-day festival closed with a sumptuous performance by Human Audio Sponge, comprised of the original members of the '80s synth-pop trio Yellow Magic Orchestra (Ryuichi Sakamoto, Haruomi Hosono and Yukihiro Takahashi) and augmented by Keigo Oyamada (a.k.a. Cornelius).

Not to be outdone by Japan's electronic god-fathers, girl/boy indie-tronic laptop duo Fonica delivered a stellar performance, as did Towa Tei and Atom Tm, who delved into a deep bump 'n' grind session; audiences were also treated to a show-stopping DSP/nu-jazz recital by Radiq (Yoshihiro Hanno and Aoki Takamasa).

Truer to the spirit of Japanese radical reinvention and the instability of nature was the raw 25-minute performance by one-man band Tucker. He was, perhaps, the real human audio sponge, absorbing Money Mark, Emir Kusturica, Squarepusher and Sex Pistols mannerisms and turning the Sonarsound Lab into an impromptu mosh pit that washed away not only the remnants of Sonar's own institutionalized formality, but also Ma On's path of destruction. *Ejival*



1. A clip from David Barker's *Seven Day* shown at Freewaves; 2. Bomba dancers performing at Rhumba at Candela (Dustin Ross); 3. The Warp party at Amsterdam's Paradiso at ADE; 4. Fonica performing at Sonarsound Tokyo; 5. A panel at Amsterdam Dance Event; 6. Radiq setting up at Sonarsound Tokyo; 7. A clip from Micaela O'Herlihy's *Thunder Perfect Mind*, shown at Freewaves.



# TTC

TALKING TECHNO  
WITH PARIS' SENSITIVE  
HIP-HOP BASTARDS  
WORDS: JESSE SERWER PHOTO: AKROE

The first thing most listeners often notice when they check French hip-hop deconstructionists TTC is that *voice*: a high-pitched, cartoon-like thing that sounds like a giddy, helium-filled kid translating down-South speed raps into French.

"I suppose a lot of people cringed at first but that was the point," says Teki Latex, a former music writer and the foursome's English language spokesman. "Now people are used to it—I probably sound a lot less hysterical than I used to."

Along with fellow MCs Tido and Cuizinier, DJ Orgasmic and up-and-coming Parisian producers Para One and Tacteel, Latex has helped create an early contender for the new year's most progressive hip-hop album: a genre-bending slice of absurdist Euro-futurism entitled *Batards Sensibles*.

"It's a lot more robotic than anything we've done, yet more accessible and danceable," Teki says of the follow-up to the group's chaotic debut LP, *Ceci N'est Pas Un Disque*. "If Bone Thugs-N-Harmony circa *Creepin' On Ah Come Up* had started listening to Detroit techno and '80s pop, this is the music they would do in 2004. Or if DJ Assault, Dizzee and Luke Skywalker started a porn version of Black Eyed Peas with French singer Lio in the role of the white bitch and they were produced by Gescom under heavy Lil' Jon influence."

Lead single "Dans Le Club" re-imagines rapper 50 Cent as a "bearded redhead dude wearing a fluorescent green throwback, dancing to techno." Elsewhere, "Les Chantes Des Hommes" could be re-dubbed "Din Daa Daa 2005," and "Codeine" is a time signature-twisting tribute to deceased Texan producer DJ Screw (RIP).

While language issues might seem like a barrier to the typical ig'nant American, words like "pussy," "arigato" and "high school" bleed through the French often enough to let Francophobes

know where they're coming from. Even for French-speakers, though, TTC's twisted lyrical content requires some explanation.

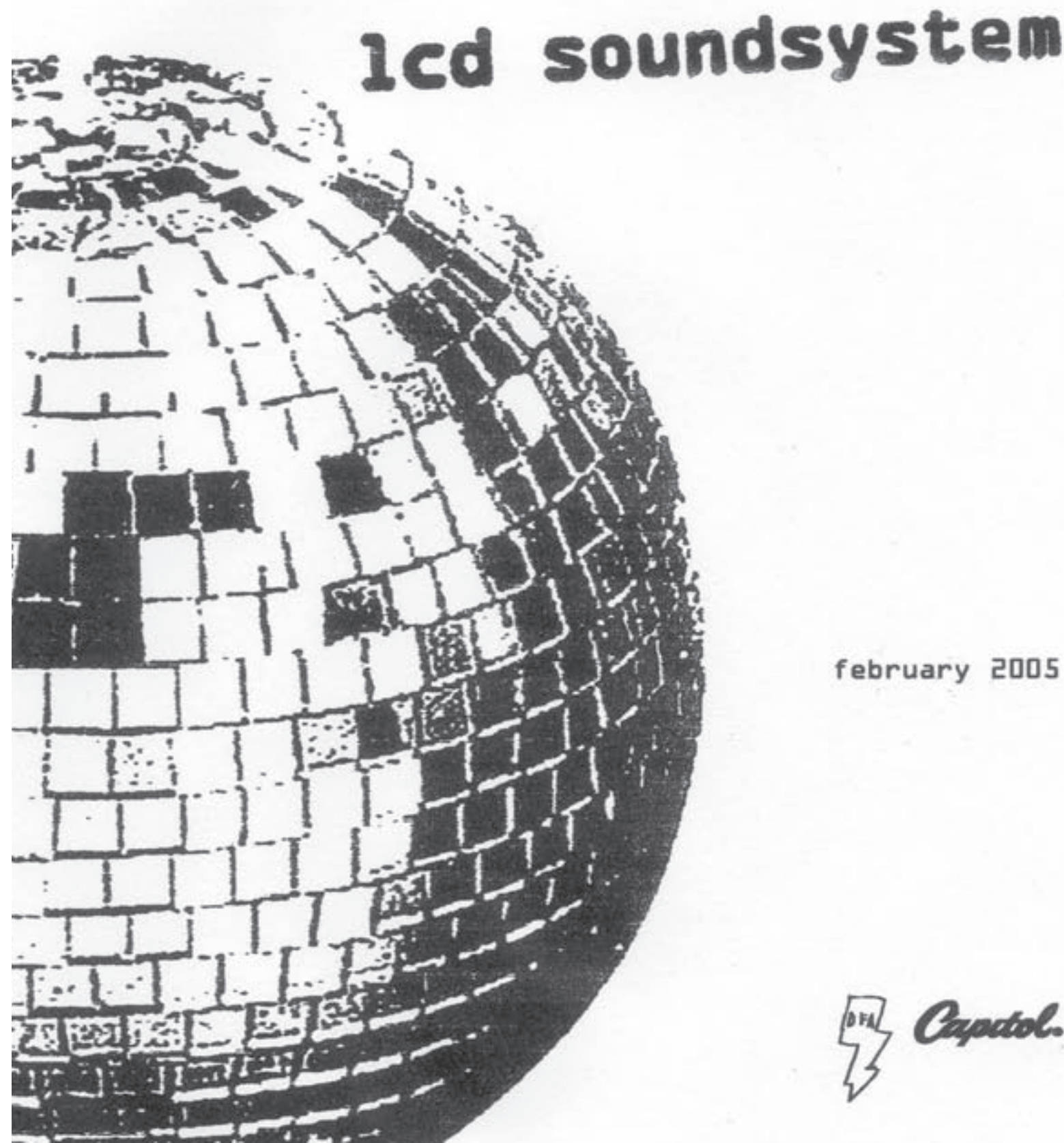
"Some of [the lyrics are] very random," Teki explains, "like word associations in the form of lists. 'Catalogue' is basically a list of what people should and shouldn't wear."

While decidedly less political than much of their French hip-hop brethren, subversion is still the name of TTC's game. "TTC means 'toutes taxes comprises' or 'all taxes included,'" Teki explains. "In France the sign 'TTC' is written all over billboards and on every price tag so we figured everyone would think of the group whenever they would see TTC written somewhere. In a way, we're using elements of capitalism for our own publicity purposes."

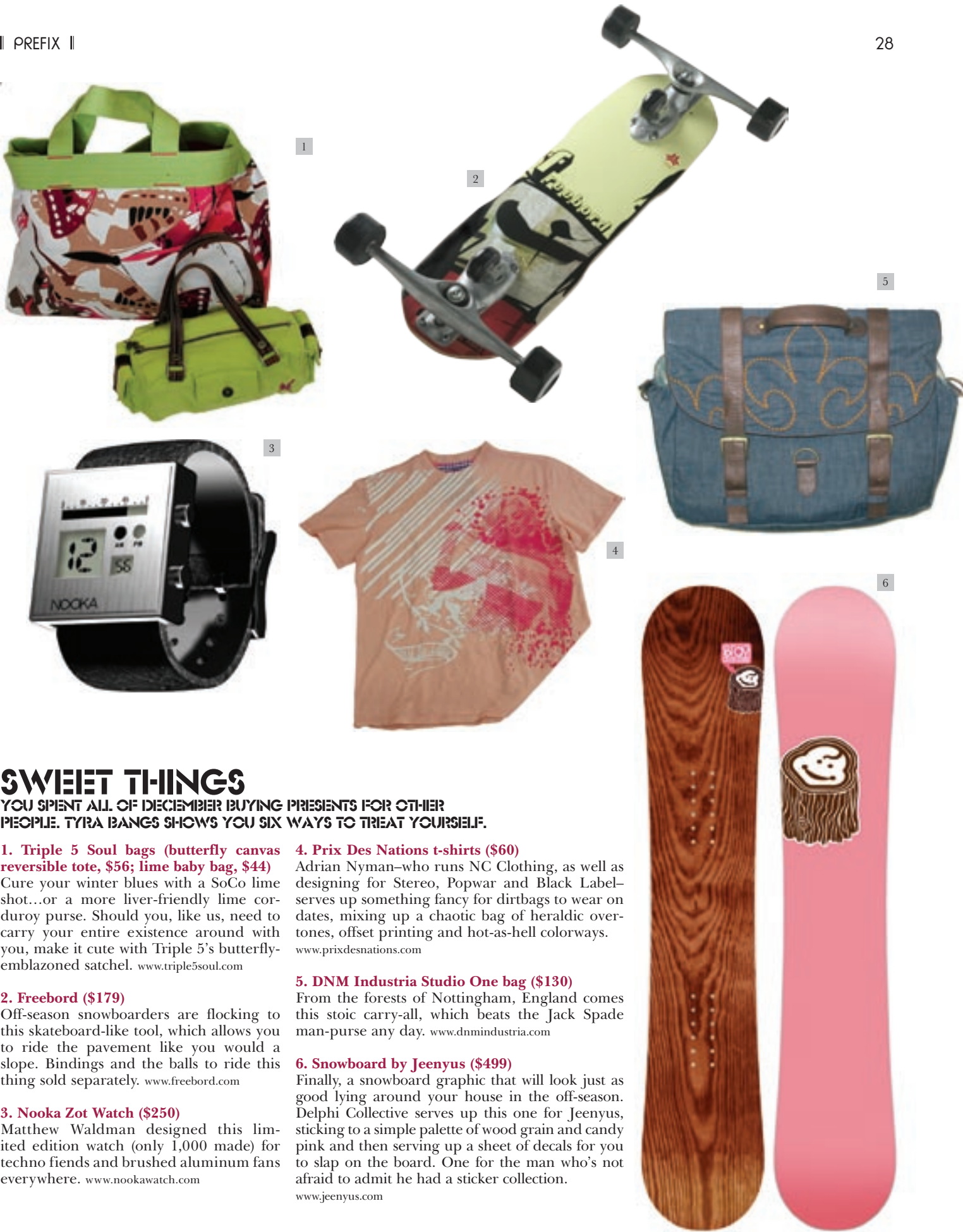
*Batards Sensibles* is out now on now on Big Dada. [www.bigdada.com](http://www.bigdada.com)



TTC (left to right): Teki Latex, DJ Orgasmic, Tido and Cuizinier







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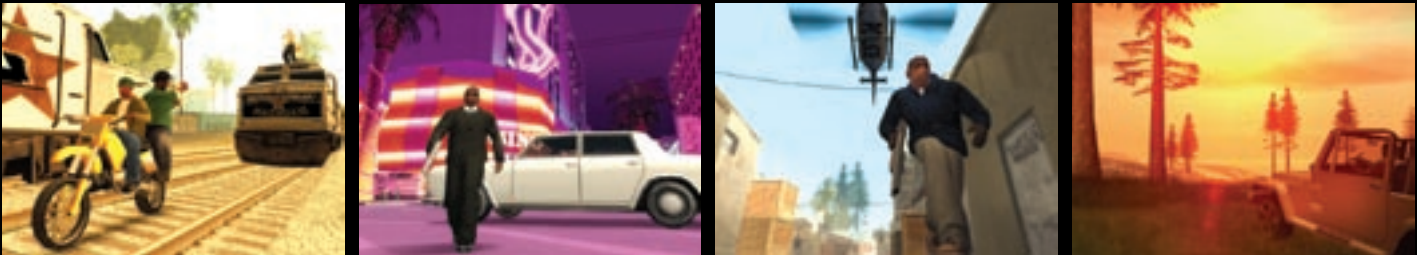
**2. Freebord (\$179)**  
Off-season snowboarders are flocking to this skateboard-like tool, which allows you to ride the pavement like you would a slope. Bindings and the balls to ride this thing sold separately. [www.freebord.com](http://www.freebord.com)

**3. Nooka Zot Watch (\$250)**  
Matthew Waldman designed this limited edition watch (only 1,000 made) for techno fiends and brushed aluminum fans everywhere. [www.nookawatch.com](http://www.nookawatch.com)

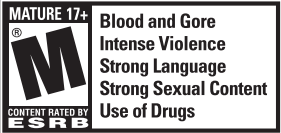
**4. Prix Des Nations t-shirts (\$60)**  
Adrian Nyman—who runs NC Clothing, as well as designing for Stereo, Popwar and Black Label—serves up something fancy for dirtbags to wear on dates, mixing up a chaotic bag of heraldic overtones, offset printing and hot-as-hell colorways. [www.prixdesnations.com](http://www.prixdesnations.com)

**5. DNM Industria Studio One bag (\$130)**  
From the forests of Nottingham, England comes this stoic carry-all, which beats the Jack Spade man-purse any day. [www.dnmindustria.com](http://www.dnmindustria.com)

**6. Snowboard by Jeenyus (\$499)**  
Finally, a snowboard graphic that will look just as good lying around your house in the off-season. Delphi Collective serves up this one for Jeenyus, sticking to a simple palette of wood grain and candy pink and then serving up a sheet of decals for you to slap on the board. One for the man who's not afraid to admit he had a sticker collection. [www.jeenyus.com](http://www.jeenyus.com)



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**GB**  
LONNIE LISTON SMITH MEETS  
DJ PREMIER IN BEATMAKER GB'S  
JAZZ UNIVERSE.  
WORDS: PETER NICHOLSON PHOTO: MARK ANTHONY

“Making music is what I have to do. I just don’t have a choice, man,” laughs 21-year-old Gabriel Reyes-Whittaker over the phone from Long Beach in Southern California. His gorgeous debut album, *Soundtrack for Sunrise* (Sound In Color), has just dropped, and he still has to finish college, but GB knows where he’s going because he’s been headed that way for a while.

After dropping piano lessons in junior high to focus on writing his own songs, GB soon downloaded some recording software and went from there, with his unauthorized remix of Vikter Duplaix’s “Manhood” catching the ear of King Britt. Suitably impressed, Britt took the then 17-year-old GB under his wing and it’s been onwards and upwards ever since. “It was a huge boost,” enthuses GB. “The [second] remix that I did was for Jody Watley—that came out on King’s label. Jody Watley is someone I looked up to and I definitely wouldn’t have been able to do music with her had it not been for someone like King to make that happen.”

Britt had every reason to be impressed—GB has a huge musical talent, and he’s able to command several styles on *Soundtrack for Sunrise*. Whether it’s the languid, spaced out soul of “Caribbean Temptress,” the strutting broken beat of “After All,” or the growling and ominous abstract hip-hop of “Black Monolith,” GB’s productions are as assured as they are inventive. And unlike many young artists who prefer to work in isolation, GB says interaction was an essential part of making his first album. “It’s a jazz mentality,” he explains. “You get into the studio and you let it happen. I came up with most of the tracks as just sketches in my bedroom, and then brought them into the studio. So for



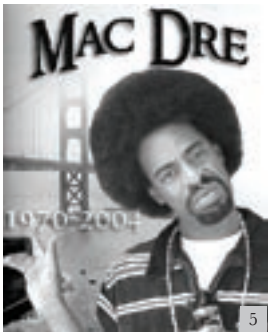
all the people that I collaborated with, be it in the Sound In Color studio or a variety of other studios we worked in, I had my sketch that I came with and then the magic really happens in the moment.”

Though his confidence shines through in his many collaborations with more established artists (including Steve Spacek, Flora Purim and Airtó Moreira), GB still realizes his good fortune—even his moniker stands for Gifted and Blessed. “My parents were listening to Flora, so when I was growing up I was hearing [her] all the time,” he says. “It’s amazing...for Sound In Color to hook that up is like a dream come true.”

The second single from *Soundtrack for Sunrise*, “Livre” feat. Flora Purim and Airtó Moreira with a King Britt remix, is out now. [www.soundincolor.com](http://www.soundincolor.com)







SPIN  
CYCLE  
NEWS AND GOSSIP  
FROM THE MUSIC  
WORLD

Electronic pioneer **A Guy Called Gerald** releases *All Things Want They Need!* on K7 in late February. **Chemical Brothers'** *Push The Button* (Astralwerks) is out January 25, featuring guests including Mos Def's brother **Anwar Superstar** and London folk harmony singers **Magic Numbers**. French techno phenom **Laurent Garnier's** *The Cloud Making Machine* (FCom/PIAS) is out January 31. A lucky winner of the **Mr. Scruff's Biggest Fan** contest toasted tea cups on New "Ears" Eve with the man himself. See for yourself at [www.mrscruff.com](http://www.mrscruff.com). Speaking of famous Ninjas, computer gaming giants **Ubisoft** hired Ninja Tune dark dancer **Amon Tobin** for their new project *Chaos Theory*; his soundtrack to the game *Splintercell* is released on January 31. Australian art magazine *Refill* opened its own Refill Space Gallery in Sydney. See pics at [www.refillmag.com](http://www.refillmag.com). "Write Your Name Across My Heart" and "Islands in the Stream" were just a few of the hits that left **Jamaican fans** screaming and dancing for more at the second sold-out **Kenny Rogers** concert held in Kingston, Jamaica last November. Many Jamaicans are ardent American country and western music fans. Graphic design and downtempo lovelies **Lemon Jelly** release '64 - '95 (XL) January 25 on DVD, CD, Deluxe CD and limited edition **5 X 10" vinyl box**. The title refers to the span in years of the various samples used on the project. **Net shit** got a little nicer with the launch of **Grokster**, one of the leading peer-to-peer file-sharing applications; they will distribute a version of **Mercora P2P Radio**—the internet's largest, legal and licensed peer-to-peer music search and discovery service. **Grokster Radio** can be downloaded from [www.grokster.com](http://www.grokster.com). Santa Cruz, CA rap group **Co-Deez's** album for Hella Records (home of Bored Stiff) features **Goapele**, **San Quinn**, **Casual** and the late **Mac Dre**. **Danger Mouse**, who *NME* hailed as the "Hottest Hip-Hop Producer in the World," is currently hidden away in the UK producing the highly anticipated new **Gorillaz** album. **Surfers**

**who make things** showed us those things this past December and January at the show *Sea Donkies On Airplane Wings*, held at New Image Gallery in West Hollywood, CA. Included were works by wave riders **Thomas Campbell**, **Barry McGee**, **Geoff McFetridge** and **Ozzie Wright**. **Hip-hop and pop culture** get low-balled at [sarcasm-central](http://sarcasm-central.com): [www.gossipingbitches.com](http://www.gossipingbitches.com). If smooth **Swedish house** is your thing, hear some for free at [www.dhnrecords.com](http://www.dhnrecords.com), and look for DHN's new EP, "Sound Scapes: Scandinavia," out now. **Graphic design wizard** and erstwhile *XLR8R* contributor **Jon Santos** will debut his first solo show on January 20. The show, which runs through February 3 at I Heart (262 Mott St., New York), features silk-screened works on paper that project a futuristic cubism. **Passings:** Roots reggae legend **Errol Thompson** died the weekend of November 14. Thompson, along with producer **Joe Gibbs**, engineered on thousands of recordings during reggae's golden era in the '70s. For more go to [roots-archive.com](http://roots-archive.com). The band played "Shimmy Shimmy Ya" while RZA read the eulogy at the funeral of **Wu-Tang Clan** member **Old Dirty Bastard** (Russell Jones), 35, who died of an apparent heart attack while in a Manhattan recording studio. Andre Hicks, 34, better known as Vallejo rapper **Mac Dre** was gunned down November 1 in a freeway shooting in Kansas City, MO following a performance. Geff Rushton (a.k.a. **Johnn Balance**), 42, co-founder of industrial noise and experimental music duo **Coil**, died in November of an alcohol-related accident at his home. **Blogs du jour:** Everything you wanted to know about the **music industry in New York** (plus loads of useful links) is found at [www.coolfer.com/blog](http://www.coolfer.com/blog). Get critic **Simon Reynolds'** blasts on grime, politics and great new music musings at [blissout.blogspot.com](http://blissout.blogspot.com). **Techno and IDM** get thoroughly dissected at [gutterbreakz.blogspot.com](http://gutterbreakz.blogspot.com). **DJ Monty Luke's** San Frantastic blog [www.justiceleague.com/tsm/blog](http://www.justiceleague.com/tsm/blog) will make you "believe." Snowflakes are falling.

1. Mr. Scruff; 2. Johnn Balance;  
3. Kenny Rogers performing live;  
4. Jon Santos' "Bear Mountain;"  
5. Mac Dre; 6. Chemical Brothers

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# THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MU

With the help of Maurice, Mutsumi Fulton makes the most provocative, in-your-face music on the planet.

Words: Mark Pytlík  
Photos: May Truong  
Design: Multifresh  
Clothing: Catherine Bentley

Welcome to Mu World, bitch!” Mutsumi Fulton barks down my ear, her shrill echo tightening up the spaces behind my eyes. “I’m talking to the person who took \$1,500 from me on eBay, plus bitches who are releasing my vocals without my permission and another shout out to those bitches who hid my tampons backstage, and especially to all haters: *I’m about to kung fu you!*”

Lifted from “Haters,” the opener from Mu’s second album, *Out Of Breach (Manchester’s Revenge)*, Fulton’s welcoming monologue comprises equal parts convulsive rage and clumsy, almost farcical absurdity. It’s that strange intersection that informs Mu’s sound, some of the most psychologically rich dance music in recent memory.

Mu (pronounced “Moo”) is the brainchild of Mutsumi and husband Maurice Fulton. He takes care of the jackhammering rhythms, digital handiwork and sinister atmospherics, but it’s Mutsumi—with her lacerating shrieks and grammatically incorrect English—who presides over the ceremonies. Punctuated by R-rated disses, dysfunctional vignettes and piercing shrieks,

her energy is so fascinatingly expressed that you can’t help but selfishly hope that she’ll be violently angry with at least one person at any given time in her life.

In the same way that a bird might build a nest out of rubberbands, condom wrappers and coffee cups, Mu’s stunning 2003 debut *Afro Finger and Gel* saw the Japanese-born Mutsumi fashion a lyrical world from our cultural refuse. Maurice’s complex, daring production work was a story in itself, but Mutsumi’s contributions edged it into psychological terrain and made it provocative. Here was Western culture being reflected back to us through the eyes of someone who had watched it from the outside. And what’s more interesting than finding out how someone else sees you?

## TRUE STORY

We are in New York. It’s the day after Mutsumi’s spirited appearance at a live showcase for Output Recordings, and despite the gloomy weather, she’s zigzagging happily down the sidewalk. Swimming in baggy jeans, an oversized coat and a backwards baseball cap, the pocket-sized Mutsumi appears totally at odds with her feral album persona. In conversation, she comes across as bubbly and energetic, sometimes even eager. She melts away preconceived notions with endearing warmth. And yet, as she declares proudly, everything about Mu is strictly autobiographical. “It’s all true story,” she beams. “All of it.”

Mutsumi (maiden name Kanamori) was born in the small Japanese town of Toyohashi, where she grew up at odds with her culture’s rigid ideologies. Her disenfranchisement with Japan and her love of the English language—stoked by a fondness for Michael Jackson’s *Bad* and *Diff’rent Strokes* reruns—led her to plot her escape. “I really wanted to [leave Japan] before I became 22,” she remembers. “I don’t know why I thought that. I didn’t have even passport at that time. So how can I come up with such money in three months? The only way I could think of was to sell sex.”

It’s an experience she relays with disarming candor. “It was a Yakuza world,” she explains, a reference to Japan’s organized crime underground. “[For the] whole three months of the time, I was completely sober. I remember all of [the] crazy shit I saw. Actually, I have a lot to write from the experience. I had no regrets doing that, because I wouldn’t be here without it. But it’s not a good thing to do if you don’t need to. I don’t think many people are able to do it anyway.”

The risk paid off. By the time she was 22, Mutsumi was married and living in Sheffield. Her marriage didn’t last very long, but she liked the city enough that she decided to stay. Those early days were tough on her—she could barely speak English, only knew a handful of people and was shuttling through different jobs—but she never once considered going home. “I never had any money, but if I went back to Japan, I knew I wouldn’t be able to come back,” she says. “I didn’t want to come for just one or two years and then go back to Japan, because when I left I promised with a big mouth to my parents that I would be a success, that I would make [it] abroad. It’s like losing, isn’t it...going back with nothing?”

Although she was fanatical about club culture, Mutsumi never once considered becom-



ing a musician, much less a singer. Instead, she babysat, waitressed and worked in a secondhand clothes shop, where she inadvertently scored her first collaboration. “Some local musicians asked me to do vocals [for them] because my voice sounded funny,” she laughs incredulously, before unleashing a nasally *nyanyanyanya* to illustrate the point. “That’s the whole reason I started.”

### BREACH BIRTH

Nothing came of her singing until a few years later, when she attended a Maurice Fulton DJ set at Manchester’s Electric Chair club. Although they’d previously chatted briefly at a Sheffield event, they connected instantly. They began a relationship and started floating musical ideas around. Soon, they were married, living in Sheffield, and recording together as Mu.

While the couple divides their duties evenly (he takes care of all the music, she does everything else), Maurice—a notorious introvert—prefers to stand on the sidelines. He doesn’t always figure into Mu’s touring lineup (for the time being, she thrashes around to a backing tape) and no longer wishes to be interviewed in accordance with the project. Mutsumi is similarly absent from the musical part of the equation, where she defers to her husband’s instincts. “Maurice tells me to write lyrics and when he’s finished the track, he calls me into the studio, and he reads what I wrote,” she explains. “He teaches me how to arrange a song lyrically, then we record. He’ll tell me ‘Be like witches’ or ‘Be like chickens’ or try to make me be some type of animal, to make expressions. Then after I record the lyrics, he throws me out of the studio.”

So far, the pairing has worked out brilliantly. “We complement each other because we’re so opposite,” she smiles. “I take all the media, photographs, anything! Any camera thing, I love it! He likes privacy.”

Despite his protestations to the contrary, Maurice has a significant hand in Mu. From his expertly programmed rhythms, which often change mid-track, to his carefully sculpted presentation of Mutsumi’s voice, his influence on the project cannot be underestimated. That’s not all he’s contributed, says Mutsumi. “I never really swore before I met him,” she laughs. “You know, I’ve lived in the UK for about eight or nine years. I’m like an eight-year-old kid—I’m gonna pick everything up, accents too. I’ve got a Yorkshire accent, a Sheffield accent...”

### ANGER MANAGEMENT

Where *Afro Finger and Gel* clangs like a wind tunnel full of rusty lockers, *Out Of Breach* registers as more spacious, even playful in parts. With odes to everyone from Michael Jackson and Paris Hilton to The Rapture’s Luke Jenner and the Unabombers’ Luke Cowdrey (“We Love Guys Named Luke”), it’s also downright benevolent at times. But not everybody gets off easily, especially Mutsumi’s former label boss, Tigersushi head Charles Hagelsteen.

“All the angry tracks are about Tigersushi,” Mutsumi explains. “I think the biggest mistake I made was to sign with them.” Mutsumi alleges that their animosity recently escalated when Hagelsteen blocked the single release of “Tiger Bastard,” a track about their troubled relationship.

It frustrates her, but not enough to keep her from turning her anger into something useful. “When I swear in the songs, the lyrics are always angry. I think *I’m* really angry,” she says. “Most of them are angry to someone else, to somebody or something. I’m very emotional. I get angry from many things, from people...”

“In my imagination,” she adds conspiratorially, “Charles is here, in front of the microphone. I have very good energy from the inside.” If that’s not revenge enough, she’s also planning a special delivery of sorts. “I think I’m gonna make a present to send to Tigersushi,” she declares. “The first ever copy of *Out of Breach*!”

Mu’s *Out of Breach (Manchester’s Revenge)* is out February 8 on Output Recordings. [www.outputrecordings.com](http://www.outputrecordings.com)

**“Welcome to Mu World, bitch!”**

### MAURICE FULTON—A BRIEF HISTORY

In addition to a mid-’90s stint as producer for Baltimore’s Basement Boys (Crystal Waters, Ultra Nate), a brief dalliance with Warp’s Jimi Tenor, producing for !!! and amassing a long list of 12”s under his own name, Maurice Fulton has also cultivated a small phonebook’s worth of aliases. Here’s a quick and dirty guide to a few of his many *nom de plumes*:

**BOOF:** One of Fulton’s earliest projects, Boof’s 2000 debut *Life Is Water For Gerbadaisies* offered everything from straight-ahead house jams to slower, more atmospheric downtempo cuts.

**EDDIE & THE EGGS:** Best known for 2002’s full-length album *This Is Your Brain* (Josshouse Recordings), a collection of twisted breakbeat and experimental house that featured a guest turn from none other than Jimi Tenor.

**LADYVIPB:** Released a handful of deep house 12”s and one full-length (*Stories Of A Broken Heart and Recovering*) via Nuphonic during a 12-month stretch in 2001-02.

**STRESS:** One of his longest-kept pseudonyms, Stress was a venue for some of Fulton’s techier tracks. Along with 2001’s darker long-player *Why Put Me Through It* (Transfusion), Stress also issued a 12” called “Moo That Rocked The Electric Chair.” A sign of things to come.





# FREE RADICALS

Spektrum, Land Shark, Munk and DJ T. cause a riot in the house scene.

Words: David Hemingway, Vivian Host, Peter Nicholson  
Design: Multifresh

It used to be so easy to define house and techno—so easy it got boring. So a bunch of producers decided to dismiss expectations, and strive for 4/4 sounds that weren’t so easy to categorize.

Armed with the latest technology and a massive case of collective nostalgia—a re-romance with old Italo-disco records, acid house classics, late ‘70s and early ‘80s underground hits, and early rave—producers have taken off in different directions with the same basic mission: shake up house music conventions. There are tons of people pushing things forward in interesting ways—Tiefschwarz, LCD Soundsystem, Headman, Black Strobe and Mylo, to name a few—but we’ve narrowed it down to four names who are definitely helping engineer the insurrection.

**"We wanted to...have that rawness and energy that you get with a live band."**

• Spektrum

## SPEKTRUM

"I didn't have a normal voice and it took me a long time to realize that I didn't have to sing like Destiny's Child," Spektrum's distinctive front-woman Lola Olafisoye admits of the lascivious growl that oozes and spurts through her band's debut *Enter The Spektrum*. "My voice is my own. I wanted to work for myself, so I had to start believing in my gifts as a writer and performer. I don't think there's anything wrong with singing like Beyoncé, but I get more inspiration from singers from back in the day: Betty Davis, Janis Joplin, Patti Labelle, Aretha Franklin, The Pointer Sisters, Barbara Streisand and Marlena Shaw. They have a lot of power and express their emotions in a way I can relate to."

The experimental punk-funk quartet were formed after Olafisoye and classically trained producer Gabriel Olegavich were introduced by a mutual friend—they recorded a track on the same day. Subsequently, they hooked up with drummer/programmer Issac Tucker and bassist Teia Williams with the idea of melding a traditional rock structure to dance music. "We wanted to make electronic dance music but we also wanted it to be played 100 percent live and have that rawness and energy that you get with a 'live' band," explains Olegavich. The producer/programmer/multi-instrumentalist retains his fingers in many pies: he's created electrified future garage as Medasyn, remixed Christina Aguilera, played French horn for Dani Siciliano, runs the Nonstop label and works on his own experimental classical compositions. "I can't help doing other projects because I'm into so many different types of music," he says. "In doing other stuff I pick up new sounds and ideas; it keeps things moving forward."

"But," bemoans Olafisoye, "it doesn't leave enough time for Spektrum."

For her own part, Olafisoye likens the band to "a kind of therapy." "Performing and writing songs is a good and safe way of expressing your angers, joys and loves," she says. "If I didn't do it, I'd be a complete and utter bitch." As if reiterating the idea of Spektrum's technoid avant disco as a mental health care regime, the stunning Tiefschwarz remixes of Spektrum's single "Kinda New" are akin to electroconvulsive therapy, sending electric currents through the brain as a means of jolting patients out of depression. *DH*







#### LAND SHARK

As his name suggests, Land Shark is a man of contradictions. He's a producer known for driving, '80s-fueled house tracks, but when pressed for a recent record that blew his mind he cites VHS or Beta's *Night on Fire*. You can catch him at the Berkeley skate park working on frontside 5-0s to fakies, but his favorite method of overcoming a creative block isn't packing the bowl, it's vacuuming. And his flawlessly crafted tracks for Coco Machete Records meld uneasy, new wave synths with his own drawling spoken word vocals, but he got into production simply to further his DJ career.

"Now DJing is my release—go out, just fucking have fun and throw some records on," Land Shark (a.k.a. Lance Desardi) says dismissively over the phone from his Bernal Heights pad in San Francisco. This apparent disregard for the fine art of playing records belies skills that fill floors as far away as Barcelona and earn respect from other jocks. Land Shark himself tries to see just how much he can get away with behind the decks, pushing the limits of what house crowds can handle with diversions into dark, freaky tracks like the clanking, industrial thump of Cass and Tom Mangan's "I Know You Know." For this reason, the Dallas native says he likes his adopted hometown's crowds the best. "I've always been into the weird stuff, and I definitely try to push it, but you have to give it to them in doses. That's what I like about San Francisco—you can just come here and freak out and they're into it. You can play Willie Nelson and they'll be down for it."

While you won't hear too many country influences in Land Shark's sound, you will find plenty of subtle references to the Nine Inch Nails and MC 900 Ft. Jesus he grew up skating to. With his new Coco Machete single, "Slippage," featuring a moody evolution of the punchy promise shown on 2003's essential "Tie Me Up," an electronic band project he describes as "New Order-ish" in the works, and dreams of producing acts like The Cure (because the last album's "production just sounded like shit"), Land Shark is one ambitious amphibian. *PN*



#### MUNK

Ask Gomma honcho and Munk half Mathias Modica what record he wishes he made. Go on, ask him. It's not some obscure '70s German punk-funk tune, nor is it a John Zorn recording from the Knitting Factory—although both would be appropriate. "If I could play every instrument, it would have to be Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*," says Modica. "Not only is it some of the most beautiful music ever made, it was the basis for so much stuff in the 20th century. And it has the most heavy funk. It sounds like the rhythm section of the *Headhunters* from 1970, but it's from 1913."

Modica and partner Jonas Imbery aren't easy to pin down. As DJs, they play electro stormers from the likes of Alter Ego and Headman, but the music they make as Munk is all over the map, from the sparse nitrous disco of "Androgyn" to the plucky bass guitar-driven dance punk of "Kick Out The Chairs," voiced by James Murphy and Nancy of LCD Soundsystem. Their Munich-based Gomma label is similarly eclectic. Having kicked off things with 1999's *Anti NY* compilation (which presaged the punk funk revival), they proceeded to release pumping house under their Leroy Hanghofer alias, then leftfield futurist hip-hop from Rammellzee and psychedelic dancefloor treats from Danish band Who Means Who.

Modica and Imbery's aesthetic—where releasing dull music is a fate worse than death—dates back to their first meeting at the age of 13. Modica, whose dad is an avant-garde composer, instantly connected with sax player Imbery over a shared love of avant-jazz and early hip-hop. They formed the amorphous five-man Fleisch Band and began playing improvisational shows; by the time they were 15, they were also DJing hip-hop and throwing parties. The duo continued promoting electronic music shows in Munich throughout the '90s, always with the idea of straying from the formula.

"We don't like boring music and we don't like people who jump on bandwagons," explains Modica. "I think music has to be more than just part of a scene—for interesting music you have to be able to feel the spirit of the person who's making it." And Modica is very specific about how Munk keeps their essence in the music. "In the studio, we got our basic instruments. What we don't need is too much technique and too many computers—they take your brain away from the music and music has to have the human feel somehow. For us, it's important to get away from the screen." *VH*



**They  
magically  
condense  
the sweet  
sweat of two  
decades of  
house into  
six minutes  
of heaven.**

#### DJ T.

DJ T.'s sparkling tracks don't just take you back to one era in time—they take you back to every moment in the last 20 years that anyone has danced under a glittering disco ball. "Philly," for example, is a pulsating shard of Italo-influenced insurgency. "Freemind" takes a Chicago house bassline and shoots holes in it with laser beams and disco handclaps, while "Starlit" strips down the feeling of Yaz's "Situation" to the bare essentials: thumping kicks, soaring space synths and sheer electro sex themes.

Frankfurt-based T. (alias Thomas Koch) is that rare DJ/producer who is able to absorb the nostalgia of his influences without resorting to retro kitsch. It's no surprise he's able to create such elegant homages, considering he's spent the last 20 years soaking up dance music. Koch fell in love with break-dancing and Detroit electro in 1983, and then began life as a hip-hop DJ before having an acid house epiphany on the floor of Frankfurt's The Omen nightclub in '88, as Sven Vāth mixed Donna Summer's "I Feel Love" with Frankie Goes to Hollywood. Koch was so into 4/4 that he founded Germany's premiere electronic music publication, *Groove*, in 1989, and continued on as a deep house DJ.

Despite having an early '90s release with Steve Bug on Pokerflat, Koch had abandoned his production dreams until 2002, when his friends in production team M.A.N.D.Y. asked him to be part of the label they were starting with the members of Booka Shade (formerly Perky Park). Koch met up with Booka Shade engineer Walter Merziger and it was a perfect fit. "When I did the first productions with him I realized that he was totally another [caliber] of producer," Koch enthuses. "I was telling him to give me a doubled disco high-hat with a special delay sounding like this and that—five minutes later the sound was there exactly like I had it in my head. The chemistry is very special."

With a name and logo inspired by Olivia Newton-John's 1981 single, the six-man collective isn't afraid to get sweaty, as a spate of recent DJ gigs and searing electro-house releases attests. Nevertheless, the Get Physicals aren't crazy parties, says Koch, with the exception of M.A.N.D.Y.'s Patrick Jung. "Patrick is really doing the rock 'n' roll thing at the moment," he says. "We have already slept and woke up and he's still at the afterhours playing!" Koch may prefer to chill out at home with a glass of red wine, but his tracks tell a different story, as they magically condense the sweet sweat of two decades of house into six minutes of heaven. *VH*

Spektrum's *Enter the Spektrum* is out on Playhouse. [www.ongaku.de](http://www.ongaku.de)

Land Shark's "Slippage" (Coco Machete) is out now. Also check out *San Francisco Sessions Vol. 5: JT Donaldson & Lance Desardi* (OM). [www.cocomachete.com](http://www.cocomachete.com), [www.om-records.com](http://www.om-records.com)

Munk's *Aperitivo* is out now on Gomma Records. [www.gomma.de](http://www.gomma.de)

DJ T.'s "Time Out" (Get Physical) and "Radiator" (20:20 Vision) are out now. His album is due in late spring 2005. [www.physical-music.com](http://www.physical-music.com)



# FLAME THROWER

Dancehall torchbearer Capleton continues to burn up the charts with fiery rhetoric and a hot new album.

Words: Sarah Bentley  
Photos: William Richards



Run di riddim,” growls the powerful figure Rat the microphone. Crammed inside a tiny voice room at the Caveman studio in Kingston is conscious dancehall artist Capleton.

He is accompanied by eight of his House of David label associates. He clutches pieces of airplane tickets, cigarette packets and flyers, each one bearing a script bigging up a sound or radio DJ. He scans one and nods to the engineer. The intro to the 360 rhythm kicks in. At half volume Capleton chants the script until his House of David crew joins in with improvised harmonies. Satisfied, Capleton barks, “Wheel.”

A posse has gathered in the engineering room. As Capleton’s gruff but infectiously melodic deejaying soars through the air they pump their fists, flash lighters and make “*brra, brra*” gunshot noises. Even Iniman, the engineer who does this everyday, is bouncing up and down. The riddim intro repeats and the group launches into a full-throttle performance. Sweat is pouring off their heads, their faces contorting with exertion. “*Keep deh fire blazin, fire haffi burn,*” chants Capleton, raising his knees in a vigorous march. “*One World sound keep it blazin, soundboys watch an learn...next riddim.*”

The group works like this, with no drinks, no window and no fan, for three hours. Each recording—or special, as it is called—can earn an artist anything between \$50 and \$1,000 US, depending on the relationship between the artist and the sound system.

Capleton drops the last script to the floor. He has recorded over 40 specials. His stern look of concentration morphs into a broad grin. “Jah,” he shouts. “Rastafari,” the group replies. Bounding

out of the studio, he knocks fists with at least 20 men before finally making it to his people carrier.

“How often do you do a session like that, Capleton?” I shout through his window.

“Everyday sistren.”

“Where to now?” I ask.

“Negril, other side of Jamaica fi stage show. Always pon de road.”

## BURNING HOT

The last two years have confirmed Capleton’s rank in Jamaica’s dancehall elite. After a two-album union with American hip-hop label Def Jam, Capleton returned to VP Records in 2001 for a three-album deal. His 2002 release, *Still Blazin’*, was nominated for a Grammy, with audiences loving his unique blend of aggressive yet conscious deejaying, gruff but tender singing and rousing, now idiosyncratic, fire rhetoric.

In 2004, Capleton had four number one hits in Jamaica (“In Her Heart,” “Turn It Up (Fire Time),” “Consuming” and “Or Wah”), each of which hit Top 10 in international reggae charts. In October, he released his third album, *Reign Of Fire*, for VP Records, a surprising mix of dancehall classics, love ballads, rock and pop. Lyrically, the record shows him in top form, his clever turns of phrase mak-





## “Artists portray life, we do not dictate it.”

illegal in Europe and America,” says Capleton matter-of-factly. “It still is illegal in Jamaica. Artists portray life, we do not dictate it.”

“Patois cannot be directly translated to English,” he continues patiently. “When Bob Marley say, ‘I shot the sheriff,’ he didn’t actually shoot the sheriff. When we say, ‘Burn fire pon de batty man,’ it is a metaphorical fire of purification, not destruction. We are exercising our right to freedom of speech to express an opinion about a way of life. We are not advocating violence against anyone.”

He pauses, then concludes, “There’s an agenda against the music. No one has committed a crime, so how have so many artists’ shows been cancelled?”

ing it clear that his name–taken from that of a renowned Jamaican lawyer–fits perfectly. And again Capleton switches neatly between conflicting elements, mixing up lyrics about lovemaking, government disavowal, praising God, prophesying, ganja smoking and spiritual awakening.

### MORE FIRE

Capleton is currently touring America, so I interview him over the telephone. He remembers our meeting in Jamaica, or at least he says he does. “It’s up to de people to know how to be united,” commences Capleton. “No one politician is responsible for de trouble. You are in charge of your own destiny. As artists, all we can do is live righteous and make sure people have food, lickle money and upliftment.”

Living righteous is something Capleton takes very seriously. “I eat ital,” reveals the Boboshanti Rastafarian. “No drink, no flesh, no drugs. Only natural foods and herb.”

As a follower of Boboshanti, one of several sects or interpretations of Rastafarian tradition, he wraps his dreadlocks in a tight turban “to respect tradition and protect them from pollution.” And what about girls? “Oh,” he laughs. “I have one or two baby mother dem.” When asked about his Rastafarian predilection he states, “We are one. Bobos practice different, but we all have the same vision and share in the same message.”

The Rastafarians’ moral unity rings true when you look at the issue of homosexuality in Jamaica. Most artists, with the exception of Ce’Cile and Assassin, drop the occasional homophobic lyric to ensure they get a hit. “Or Wah” is *Reign Of Fire*’s most controversial tune, a brilliantly fierce track of lyrical bullets delivered over a hardcore galloping rhythm. Capleton questions a string of what he believes to be immoral practices, one being sodomy. “Only a few years ago homosexuality was

### HOUSE MUSIC

While the international media obsesses over Jamaican artists’ views on homosexuality, the Jamaican media–much like America’s hip-hop press–is preoccupied with artist beef, particularly amongst the various “houses,” which are similar to hip-hop crews. House Of David is the name of Capleton’s posse of artists, producers and friends; it is also the name of their record label and pending studio. Buju Banton’s “house” is his Gargamel crew, while Sizzla’s is Judgement Yard, named after the settlement he grew up in.

In December 2003, Jamaican newspapers reported that the House Of David disrespected Sizzla at the Rebel Salute show by storming the stage during his performance. “No matter what newspapers say,” says Capleton, being uncharacteristically softspoken, “there is no division between the houses and artists. I perform when it is dark so I see my lighter and torch. It was nearly daylight so I went on. The media love talk about artists not getting on–nine times out of 10, it’s rubbish.”

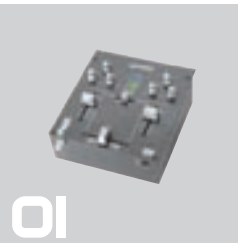
After this statement, Capleton apologizes. He has to go, as long conversations on cell phones give him a headache. “Tell the youths dem to stop use Internet to spread hate message,” he offers as a parting message. “And never let no one tell you you can’t make it in life. As long as you show humility and tolerance, victory will be sweet. Blessed.”

Capleton’s *Reign Of Fire* album is out now on VP Records. [www.vprecords.com](http://www.vprecords.com)



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# TERROR FABULOUS

46

London rhythm queen M.I.A. forges a futuristic way to fight the power.

Words: Sarah Bentley  
Illustration: M.I.A.  
Photo: David Titlow

The flow of a female rapper pumping out my stereo halted me mid-conversation. “*London calling, speak the slang now, boys say wha gwan, girls say wha wha.*”

A council estate-meets-art school dialect littered with cross-cultural street references pounded my ears. “*Shock out and get down, galang galang.*” The beats were a mongrel rhythm of dancehall, broken beat, electroclash and jungle radar effects. I felt liberated. What the fuck was this?

This is the music of Maya Arulpragasam—explosively known as M.I.A.—a dancer, heralded stencil artist and documentary maker-turned-musician. The track was “Galang,” her debut single on British independent Showbiz Records. Only 500 copies got pressed, yet the excitement “Galang” generated was phenomenal. After a frenzied bidding war, M.I.A. signed to XL Recordings, home to Dizzee Rascal and The Streets.

M.I.A.’s second single, “Sunshowers,” was a minimalist meeting of tribal drum, chants, psychedelic harmonies and disjointed political rhetoric. The cover features M.I.A.’s stencil graffiti of Tamil fighters positioned in palm trees. “I wrote it the day after [George W. Bush’s] Axis Of Evil speech,” reveals Maya. “I’m from a Tamil Tiger community in North Sri Lanka, so am I evil? Fighting terrorism is affecting the world more than terrorism. If this is being good, we better stock up on weapons. That’s what ‘Sunshowers’ is about.” Throwing her voice to imitate a

family entertainer, she counters: “That’s *my* little pop song.”

Spouting this very real observation is a beautiful girl with smooth skin and teenager-svelte limbs. She has reggaeton star Ivy Queen’s name written on her hand in marker pen. (“An artist I need to check out,” she says.) She is street, but not what marketers call urban. She raps, but isn’t a rapper. She is politically and socially aware but not traditionally conscious. Help, no box. “That’s because I’m a refugee,” Maya explains. “I travel through genres and boxes.” Her eyes glint mischievously. “People think I want to save the world, but that’s not it. I want to reach the person that doesn’t give a fuck. All we’ve done is promote apathy; this is the backlash.”

Born in the UK, Maya’s family moved back to Sri Lanka when she was six months old. Throughout her childhood she lived between her home village in North Sri Lanka and Madras in India. Due to her father’s involvement in the Tamil Tigers, she rarely saw him. When the violence became too intense, her mother took the family out of Sri Lanka into India, then on to London where they were housed in a notoriously racist council estate in Mitcham, Surrey.

“When I moved to England I was fully popped out,” she says, clearly amused by her own naivety. “At home we had Bollywood, Budjana chants and a few cassette tapes from foreign countries. I had Michael Jackson’s *Thriller*.” She smiles at the memory. “When I first heard hip-hop, I was

overwhelmed. But I guess it was the context I heard it in...”

“On one side of us was this cracked out family who needed to burgle my house, and on the other side there was this black family with a teenage boy who listened to hip-hop.” The phrase “needed to” demonstrates a rare kind of empathy. “They took my radio, so I started listening to the basslines coming from the 19-year-old. The crack family saved me.”

Now unable to relate to pop, Maya immersed herself in hip-hop. “I took it really seriously. I’d always wanted to be a dancer, and hip-hop had the best moves, beats and clothes. When I was at school I was like, ‘The 25 bus apparently goes to Hackney, [a notoriously rough London borough]. I’m gonna hang out there and I know I’m gonna run into [hip-hop].’”

This passion to experience the real underground culture took Maya into a multifarious range of social circles and subcultures. “I knew these kids in Brixton from Mauritius who were into dancehall; and then jungle was a whole other era for me...the Asian dancehall scene, that’s how I found them.” When asked if she was having identity issues, she answers simply: “I







**“It’s just an attitude. You either get it or you don’t.”**

just tried to see life.”

Maya’s open approach to living made her a cultural sponge, soaking her music and art-work in everything she experienced. Her mix-tape cover for *Piracy Funds Terrorism*—a slamming Diplo-mixed collabo that finds her chatting over dancehall and dirty South beats—shows dancehall queens, Buddhist monks, b-boys, Rastas, rioters, Mowgli dancers, police and a punk rocker. Maya stands serenely amongst them wearing a man’s t-shirt bearing a hand grenade and the words “Complaints Department.”

“What’s the point in having access to everything if you don’t turn it into something?” she offers, by way of explanation. “It makes sense to get the best from all worlds. Communities should get on the phone and swap information, but no one does that. I’m going to be the telephone.”

And M.I.A. is not all talk. The week before I spoke to her, she spent time investigating the streets of the U.S., hanging out with Harlem rapper Cam’ron’s Purple City camp in NYC. “I wasn’t sure if they would, but they totally got my mixtape,” she says proudly. “They spent ages talking about colors, like who rocked pink first. I was just like, ‘Wow, you’re not in the street selling drugs; you’re coming up with color palettes.’ They were ghetto, but just as real and confused as me. There’s a whole way of life where it doesn’t matter where you’re from, what you look like, or how you speak. It’s just an attitude. You either get it or you don’t.”

### M.I.A.’s Five Most Inspiring Musicians

1. SUPERCAT

“Nobody feels the flow like Supercat. Sean Paul is one percent of what he does.”

2. JUELZ SANTANA

“That man’s got style, lyrics, the full package. He’s my future ex-husband.”

3. THE CLASH

“Everybody can relate to The Clash. But Johnny Rotten transcends everything. He’s defined his personality down to one molecule.”

4. LEXXUS

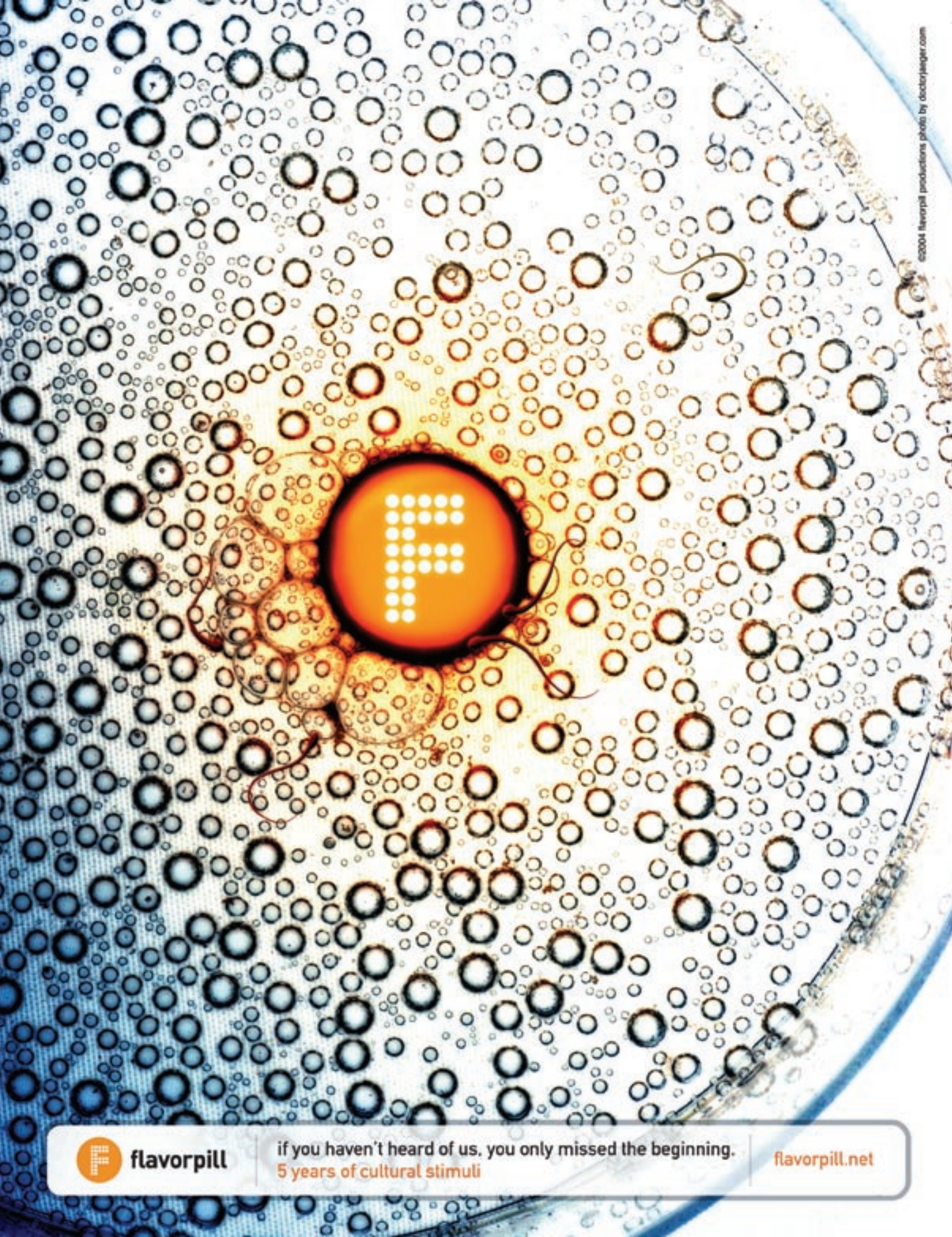
“I’ve never seen anyone control a crowd like him.”


5. PEACHES

“She helped me practically to structure my thought processes into music.”

M.I.A.’s “Galang” and “Sunshowers” singles (XL Recordings), and the *Piracy Funds Terrorism 1 & 2* mixtapes are out now. M.I.A.’s *Arular* LP drops in February on XL Recordings.

[www.miauk.com](http://www.miauk.com), [www.xlrecordings.com](http://www.xlrecordings.com)



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Dälek travels to hip-hop’s heart of darkness.

Words: Cameron Macdonald Photo: Todd Boebel



title track shimmers with metallic harmonics that evoke the sun setting over an EPA-condemned town. “Köner,” their tribute to *musique concrète* maverick Thomas Köner, broods upon a seismic bass pulse that floats a violin drone into oblivion. The crew says that their noise—alternately alienating and engrossing—is the aural counterpart to their visual surroundings in Newark, New Jersey, a withered town that is nonetheless christened with patches of beautiful, blooming Japanese cherry trees. “There is such beauty and yet, such anger and angst [in guitar feedback],” Brooks says. “When you look at an urban landscape, it’s

Will Brooks went through hell following Election Day 2004. “There was lots of cursing...disbelief, really,” says the politically charged MC with a resigned sigh. “I didn’t have aspirations of Kerry doing anything groundbreaking, but I just figured that he’d give us a couple more years on this Earth before it blew up.”

Such dread-filled observations are everyday fodder for Brooks (alias MC Dälek), and his partners, producer Oktopus (Alap Momin) and producer/turntablist Still (Hsi-Chang Lin). Together, the three make up apocalyptic hip-hop crew Dälek, whose name visually references the race of mutant robots from the TV show *Dr. Who* (but is pronounced “dialect”). It’s a fitting name for a group that translates hip-hop into machine-soul, with beats that bust down walls, cyanide-tipped guitar noises and the keen focus of a murder witness. This isn’t your average hip-hop, but Brooks is comfortable breaking the mold. “Being an outsider in hip-hop because of the sound we make doesn’t even matter,” he says. “I just want us to express ourselves the way we need to express ourselves.” In fact, Brooks is more likely to be inspired by guitar drones or experimental music than rap; he’s only bought two contemporary hip-hop albums in the past two years: Cannibal Ox’s *Cold Vein* and Jay-Z’s *Black Album*. “If you’re not coming in the way EPMD or Rakim did back in the day, I’m a hard person to please,” he says. To that end, Dälek’s latest album, *Absence*, is full of sheet metal-slicing guitar sounds, which came from sampling their takes on the axe. (“Oktopus plays guitar, and the rest of us just make ‘sounds’ on guitar,” Brooks quips.) *Absence* also contains two ambient instrumentals—something almost unheard of on hip-hop albums. The

same thing. I’d like to think that our songs paint an accurate picture of what Newark is, and [what it’s like] living in it.” Dälek’s initial attempts to manifest the squall and throb of industrial Newark were met with shock from show attendees, who were doubtlessly expecting your average indie hip-hop show. “A lot of the time, [the audiences’] jaws dropped and they couldn’t believe what was happening,” Brooks recalls. “We wanted to be like My Bloody Valentine sonically and just hit you with a wall of sound as hard as possible.” Dälek started out with a copy of Fugazi’s old booking list and incessantly toured America’s indie rock circuit for years, playing for gas money and performing in basements. Their sheer vitriol paid off, leading to them hooking up Brooklyn’s Gern Blandsten label and releasing their cult favorite 1997 debut, *Negro, Necros, Nekros*. A few years later, Faith No More’s Mike Patton, who runs the Ipecac label, came calling for a demo tape. Instead, he got a complete album—2002’s *From Filthy Tongues of Gods and Griots*, an experimental excursion into guitar feedback, Bomb Squad-recipe percussion and live tablas. *Derbe Respect*, *Alder* was another happy accident. Teutonic post-punk legends Faust heard their band name-dropped on Dälek’s “Classical Homicide” and immediately called their booking agent. Dälek then spent two weeks in Germany, fusing their death march beats to Faust’s drones until both groups could barely keep their bleary eyes open. This past year also saw studio collaborations with Florida country-folk singer Laura Miner, and an electronic score for New York’s Anti Social Music Chamber Orchestra. (“It’s pretty intense,” Brooks says of the latter, “although it doesn’t have a theme like an opera would, [with] a fairy jumping through the woods.”)

Brooks’ bottom-line is to have no regrets. “The fact that we’re never going to sell millions of records doesn’t matter to me,” he says. “What matters is that I make music that I believe in. Twenty to 30 years from now, nobody is going to pull out a picture of me wearing MC Hammer pants and ask me, ‘Yo, you released this record, what do you think about it now?’”

*Absence* (Ipecac) is out now. [www.deadverse.com](http://www.deadverse.com), [www.ipecac.com](http://www.ipecac.com)

**DÄLEK’S TOP-FIVE GUITAR FREAKOUTS**

**1. Velvet Underground “European Son” (from *The Velvet Underground & Nico*)**  
“I just love the use of harsh feedback that is so ‘out of the mix’ on this joint. Velvet Underground, for their time, were breaking ground with all these techniques. It’s great, hypnotizing.”

**2. My Bloody Valentine “To Here Knows When” (from *Loveless*)**  
“I think *Loveless*, overall, shows the beauty that can be found in layers and layers of guitar feedback. Kevin Shields’ use of noise on this record is just ill. I had never heard anything like this, ever.”

**3. Glenn Branca Ensemble “3rd Movement” (from *Symphony No. 6*)**  
“The title of this piece says it all: ‘Devil Choirs at the Gates of Heaven.’ So fucking heavy and intense. It’s a complete assault.”

**4. All Natural Lemon & Lime Flavors “Puzzled into Pieces” (from *Turning Into Small*)**  
“L&L greatly influenced our early sound and still does today. ‘Puzzled into Pieces’ has such great hooks and melodies that are molded from screeching guitars. Also, the arrangement and the dynamics are brilliant.”

**5. Destructo Swarmbots “Tripped and Fallen with Precision” (from *2*)**  
“Destructo Swarmbots creates landscapes out of guitar noise and feedback. This is a brutally honest and pure sound. When you walk out on the other side, you feel like you have been beaten with a lead pipe...but you also feel cleansed.”



# FROM PHILLY WITH SOUL

The next generation of East Coast soul artists show you how style's done in the City of Brotherly Love.

Words: Sean O'Neal  
Photos: Shawn Brackbill

Thriving in the shadow of tireless New York City, Philadelphia is a picturesque, blue-collar town bubbling with giant wall murals and swanky restaurants, while concurrently struggling with a deteriorating public school system, apparent racial separation and plenty of low-income housing. It's this mix of opposing elements of joy and pain that makes Philly synonymous with the production of some of the best American soul music, from Archie Bell to Gamble & Huff.

Stumble into one of a number of intimate hot spots—Fluid, North By Northwest, The Five Spot, Grape Street Pub—and you'll hear a new generation of soul musicians beating down the path to legend by combining historically rich sounds with hip-hop, broken beat and house rhythms. Alongside Philly neo-soul and hip-hop big names such as Bahamadia, Cash Money, Jill Scott and Jaguar Wright, crowds are gratefully bobbing heads to the rich and uniquely subversive sounds of DJs and artists such as Rich Medina, ?uestlove of The Roots, Lady Alma, the Ill Vibe Collective, Lizz Fields, Jneiro Jarel, and, of course, King Britt.

"Philly soul is the essence of musical beauty," says veteran Britt, founder of Sylk 130, Ovum and the new label Fivesixrecordings. "It combines the timbres of natural instruments, the arrangement of traditional classical music, the heart of be-bop and the blessings of gospel and blues." Like most soul artists, Britt eulogizes early innovators like Gamble & Huff, Harold Melvin and Phyllis Hyman, and he recently completed a remix of "For the Love of Money" by the O'Jays for a Philadelphia International remix project that he's coordinating. "What made all of these artists so amazing was the combination of musicians—like the string players from an orchestra working on soul records in the '70s. There is always that combination of genres in Philly."

"Philly is known for that back beat that we use," offers Lizz Fields, a budding

Philly-born singer who has worked with DJ Spinna and recently released her charismatically heart-warming *By Day By Night* (ABB) album. Early on, Fields fell in love with the "ease" and "flirtatiousness" of jazz vocal stylings while attending Creative & Performing Arts High School along with Boyz II Men (who later expanded R&B with their four-part harmonies) and Amel Larrieux. "Many producers in Philly incorporate composition and change, using some of those beats that The Roots and others have made. Those are things that we've done in jam sessions. It's just a way people play. There's a behind-the-beat kind of feel. I actually don't know where it comes from."

"The reason [soul] kicked off so well back then is because that's all we had," says Lady Alma, the vocal sensation behind recent soul ooze-ers like 4hero's "Hold It Down" and Sylk 130's "Happiness." "We were oppressed—and I'm not just talking about black people, but people in general. So many different musicians grew up in Philadelphia. All of those cats believed in that sound, and it was important to have it out there. Many other cities took notice. They knew it was important to us."

Philly soul feels natural, as if the artist was put there to make that song. "The music has a sophistication in the arrangements, especially [those of] Philly International," asserts Rich Medina, a pacesetter DJ and MC hosting regular events in NYC and Philly including Little Ricky's and Afrorikan Vybe; he has played alongside Roy Ayers, Louie Vega, Run DMC and countless others. "As a kid, I was moved by the string arrangements and percussion sections without even being able to articulate it at the time," says Medina. "That signature repeating kick drum in MFSB's 'Love is the Message' or Vincent Montana's arrangements for Salsoul brought me some of the best crowd responses of any records I have ever played in my sets."

As a DJ, Medina digs for the essential, long-lost gems. He says it's still humbling to stumble over classic Philly soul records that he never knew existed. "[The Philly sound has] evolved with the music industry and continued to adapt to the changes in radio protocol and such," he explains. "At the same time, it has maintained this earthi-

ness that is missing in many records from other places that sell more units. So as much as it has evolved with the times, Philly's soul music always has that honest, classic edge to it."

"The music stands out even nowadays because you don't hear songs like that from mainstream artists on commercial radio anymore," contends Jneiro Jarel, a recent transplant from Brooklyn. Jarel, whose debut *Three Piece Puzzle* (Kindred Spirits) is out now, is known for his laidback beats, witty rhymes and collaborations with Jazzanova, Extended Spirit and Britt and Medina (as Chocolate Ninjas). "The vibe in Philly is laid-back, but not too slow," says Jarel of his new environs. "People are friendly, and I love the atmosphere."

While today's flourishing Philly artists receive praise and reverence from all over the world, there's a sense of urgency entrenched within the City of Brotha-ly Love. "What's exciting to me right now," says Medina, "is that people are looking for a new sound in spite of how dope the current one is." In Philly, aspiration and vision never cease to evolve. "We are children growing up with these rich sounds and textures," says Britt. "So when we do music—be it rock, soul, jazz or electronica—we have the history of everyone before us in our sound."

For more on these artists, visit [www.ladyalma.com](http://www.ladyalma.com) [www.illvibe.net](http://www.illvibe.net) [www.kingbritt.com](http://www.kingbritt.com), [fivesixmedia.com](http://fivesixmedia.com) [www.richmedina.com](http://www.richmedina.com) [www.lizzfields.com](http://www.lizzfields.com) [www.jneirojarel.com](http://www.jneirojarel.com)



Producer and vocalist Jneiro Jarel on South Street





Hip-hop veteran Jazzy Jeff at Armand's Records in Center City



Vocalist Lady Alma at Latte Lounge in Northern Liberties





Producer King Britt at Philly International Studios



Radio personality Laiya St. Clair at Fluid nightclub







ALEXANDROID FALSE STARTS  
Lo/UK/CD

If only there was a “Where are they now?” special on late-night cable television for that hyped wave of Russian IDM. *False Starts* serves as a sprawling answer to where Andrey Antonets has been. It boasts 17 quite varied electro opuses—some with breathy girl vocals, some taut analog numbers, some 4/4 excursions and some more imaginatively orchestrated fugues, with the old-timey horn section-led brilliance of “Debil” a highlight. After investing the time for a thorough listen, you’ll hope this proves no false start at all. *Brion Paul*

THE BOATS SONGS BY THE SEA  
Moteer/UK/CD

Not the big, container shipping ones piled high with mass consuming largess, but small, delicate ones with carefully pitched masts, subject to the slightest breeze. Yes, those boats. Piloted by the inventive instrumentation of Craig and Andrew—whose acoustic instruments and brushed drums echo in the depths of their admiralty law-abiding CPU, and get buttressed by the humanizing ballast of Elaine’s ready-to-evaporate vocals—this little craft’s got some serious stealth tailwind, making life by the sea seem spookily enchanting. *Brion Paul*

BOY IN STATIC NEWBORN  
Alien Transistor/GER/CD

At first listen, the first full-length from Boy in Static (23-year-old Alex Chen) sounds strangely familiar, though

it’s hard to pinpoint from whence the déjà vu springs. Is this Múm meets My Bloody Valentine? Mouse on Mars meets Sparklehorse? With rather astonishingly fine production (Chen plays almost all the instruments here and created the whole album from his bedroom), *Newborn* harkens back to all these and more, striking a delicate balance between the pinprick micro-circuitry of Chen’s laptop and the lo-fi fuzz of his acoustic guitar and hushed vocals. It’s official, kids: Indietronica is the new emo. *Anna Balkrishna*

BRAZILIAN GIRLS  
Verve/US/CD

A four-piece transcontinental band from Manhattan, Brazilian Girls references not only Brazil, but model-flaunting catwalks, fashionable Parisian shopping districts, German burlesque houses and deep down and dirty Copacabana sex shows. Theirs is generous, multi-faceted pop music that recalls the brainy zeitgeist of Talking Heads and UK trip-hop filtered through lush vocals and garish instrumentation. “Corner Store” dances on hazy brass and a funky New Orleans groove; “Pussy” drips with ska humidity and city smarts; “Lazy Lover” sounds like The Orb cooling it with Debussy. Ute Lemper eat your heart out. *Ken Micallef*

BUTCH CASSIDY SOUND SYSTEM  
BUTCHES BREW  
Fenetik/UK/CD

Not to be confused with the rapper who worked with Snoop Dogg and Xzibit, producer Michael “Butch

Cassidy” Hunter’s debut album fashions classic reggae and funk elements into upbeat, keenly musical pieces that remain true to reggae’s sleepy vibe. The title cut is by far the strongest, punctuating catchy riffs with horns and verbal shout-outs, but it’s Cassidy’s keen ear for subtle musical touches that renders his musical brew cohesive and slippery smooth. *Janet Tzou*

CAPLETON REIGN OF FIRE  
VP/US/CD

In a singles-based genre like dancehall, cohesive albums are hard to come by, but Capleton pulls it off. The Prophet fills the 20-track offering with rootsy selections like the lead single, “That Day Will Come,” a cautionary tale of the rapture. “Ton Load” and “Steppin’ Up” stick to conscious themes as well, but he rides hot bashment riddims like Chrome, Red Alert, and Kopa, too. Unlike his past releases, he steers clear of even a single “batty boy” reference; instead, it’s up to the listener to determine who’s on the receiving end of the fire in tracks like “Burn Dem.” *Ross Hogg*

CHALI 2NA THE FISHMARKET  
Fish Market/US/CD

When you’re one of four MCs in a group and people think the true stars are the two DJs, it’s easy to get lost in the shuffle. But Jurassic 5’s Chali 2na ain’t havin’ that—and that’s good because he’s far too dope to get lost in the sauce. First off: This is not an official album per se, but a mixtape of Chali’s guest appearances with a couple new joints. That’s all good, though, because Chali’s plentiful vocal talents and underappreciated versatility get their proper shine. If he’s trying to whet people’s appetites for a proper 2na full-length, mission accomplished; this CD will have you fishing for Chali’s funk. *Pete Babb*

JACK DANGERS  
LOUDNESS CLARIFIES/ELECTRONIC MUSIC  
FROM TAPELAB  
Important/US/2xCD

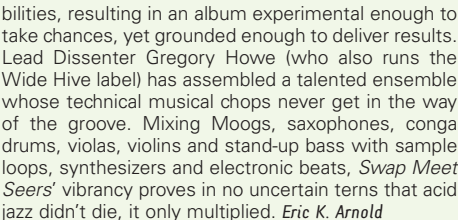
What Steve Reich and John Cage did with electronics and *musique concrète* in the 20th century, Jack Dangers is deftly handling in the 21st. *Loudness Clarifies/Electronic Music From Tapelab* is his sophomore double-set for Important, featuring guests David Wright (Code Indigo, Callisto) and Jon Drukman (Bass Kittens, The Ultraviolet Catastrophe). Dangers gets dancey first with Meat Beat Manifesto-esque boombity-boom beats-and-breaks on disc one, and electro-noodly on the next, with nifty goodies from his Marin Tapelab studio. His hero is the ultra-rare (as in one left) 600-lb. EMS Synthi 100 and its awesome bleeps and bleeps. Dangers’ dual sounds endure masterfully! *Stacy Meyn*

DE LA SOUL  
DE LA MIX TAPE: REMIXES, RARITIES & CLASSICS  
LIVE AT TRAMPS, NYC 1996  
Tommy Boy/US/CD

After its stint as the most compelling act on Tommy Boy for 15 years, De La Soul was sold to Elektra, who summarily dropped them. Since these releases are Tommy Boy/Rhino comps, probably not a dime you drop for either will go to the band. Plus, the *Mix Tape*’s remixes of “Me, Myself and I” and “Itzsoweezee” are a waste, and “More Than U Know” can be had for better value on Prince Paul’s neglected *Prince of Thieves*. *Live at Tramps* is harder to resist. Mos Def, Common, and Jungle Brothers are on hand to remind you of De La’s cultural worth, but unless you hear the band is getting a piece of this, then download it. You’ll sleep better at night. *Scott Thill*

DISSENT 3 SWAP MEET SEERS  
Wide Hive/US/CD

Despite being overshadowed by labelmates DJ Zeph and Variable Unit, Dissent isn’t a group that can be easily dismissed. Their progressive jazztronic stance mixes musical improvisation with dancefloor sensi-



FLEVANS MAKE NEW FRIENDS  
Tru Thoughts/UK/CD

How very thoughtful of the TruThoughts stable to release this delectable little gem: *Make New Friends* throws vibrant, punchy tunes from three previous Flevans EPs onto one handy disc, all the better for delivering a full, sustained dose of Flevans’ uniquely cheeky, cut-and-paste sound. “Dinner with Boskins” drips with sassy funk and sharp brass fanfares, “Me & My Moody” oozes a smarmy, tongue-in-cheek charm, “Get Caribou” is all bright, sparkling, piano-licked cheer and “Sweep Definitive” is a sly, seductive, fractured-beat affair embellished with lush strings. Inventive, varied and consistently upbeat, Flevans takes happy-go-lucky genre-bending into new musical territory. *Christine Hoieh*

FRED ONES PHOBIA OF DOORS  
Raptivism/US/CD

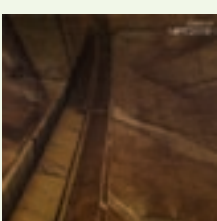
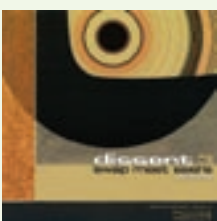
Sonic Sum cohort Fred Ones makes his bid for RJD2-level status with his own producer’s album, *Phobia of Doors*, a promising listen that falls a bit short. Fred Ones’ production is impeccable, handling delicate strings and satisfying thump on “Evolve,” jangling electro on “One Last Stab” and a slow, thick Asian dub on “Some Seeds.” The guest rhymers are a mixed bag, with Life Long spinning a great anti-commercial tale on “The Puppet M.C.” and Yazeed conjuring an Asimov-level sci-fi epic on “2087,” but Slug just chases his tail on the tail-chasing yarn “Sex and More.” *Rob Geary*

FRONTLINE WHO R YOU  
Landmark-Infrared/US/CD  
FEDERATION THE ALBUM  
Virgin/US/CD

When you think Bay Area rap, you don’t think Richmond and Fairfield—until now. The debut album from Frontline (Locksmith and Left) is filled with bloodthirsty battle raps and gritty tales of life in “The Rich.” Left produces half the album with rock-fueled tracks, while Bay veterans E-A-Ski and CMT produce the remainder, including their breakout single “What Is It?” which also features Mr. Ski’s rhymes. Fairfield-based Federation is out to make “Hyphy”—their lead single/Bay slang for “crunk”—a household word. Super-producer Rick Rock presents MCs Doonie Baby, Goldie Gold and Mr. Stres on a surprisingly versatile album of heavy beats and vocals and emotions that are equally raw. *Ross Hogg*

GB SOUNDTRACK FOR SUNRISE  
Sound in Color/US/CD

The phrase “future soul” has always seemed like a bit of an oxymoron. According to the ancient Egyptians, our souls are eternal, so putting a time stamp on them can be a wee bit pretentious. But how else to describe GB’s music, which doesn’t exactly fit into any other quantifiable musical category? *Soundtrack for Sunrise* slides along somewhere inbetween progressive, dubby breaks, highly



musical boom-bap beats and technology-infused, melodic vocal jazz (“Livre” features Brazilian legends Flora Purim and Aírtó Moreira). You may want to call GB “future funk” so as not to offend the gods, yet there’s enough sonic science in his rhythmic meter to please the Neteru of Khemit themselves. Equally suited for a party on Earth or the after-party in the afterlife. *Eric K. Arnold*

YUKA HONDA EUCADEMIX  
Tzadik/US/CD

Lower Manhattan’s Cibo Matto always seemed to show off shopping spree bounties, rather than releasing cohesive albums. They’ll rap about the artichokes they ate, show off their discount thrash-metal CDs and finally spend the night trying on three-dozen genres. Cibo keyboardist/samplist Yuka Honda continues the good faith on her second solo album. Here, she dabbles in Greenwich Village-folkie hip-hop, then gelatinous broken beat, then starry halo keyboard trips to Neptune, then harpsichord ballads for Fellini movies, then ‘97-style alternative rock, and then....it’s difficult to understand her personal statement since she wears so many masks. Nonetheless, *Eucademix* is fine, intrepid experimentalism. *Cameron Macdonald*

JESU  
Hydra Head/US/CD

Jesu finds ex-Godflesh mastermind Justin Broadrick getting reacquainted with his inner guitar hero, with chest-caving help from drummer Ted Parsons (Swans, Prong). Akin to bands like Isis and Pelican, *Jesu* rumbles and bristles into the new wave of heavy guitar fog generators, swirling metal, shoegazer and grunge tonalities into pulverizing shitstorms of sound. Nevertheless, Jesu is Broadrick’s most melodic project yet. His songs strive for ascension and redemption, but they’re burdened by woebegone



SIGUR RÓS

SIGUR RÓS VON One Little Indian/UK/CD

On 1999’s *Agaetis Byrjun* and 2002’s ( ), Icelandic quartet Sigur Rós took shoe-gaze to church and reinvented the term “cold rockin’ it.” But before these breakout albums came their 1997 debut *Von*, which evokes the blasted desolation of early Tangerine Dream and Pink Floyd’s ominous spaciousness. Throughout most of *Von*, Jónsi Birgisson chillingly coos like an angel in an echo chamber. The gorgeous “Myrkur” is a shockingly conventional shoegaze anthem circa Creation Records 1990, but it’s the epic, creepy hymn “Hafssol,” whose mysterious voices and organs and guitars swirl like an angel in purgatory, that provides inner-space rock for the ages. *Dave Segal*

moans, lumbering tempos and long-windedness. At its best, *Jesu* recalls Loop on ‘ludes, but more often this exhausting disc is shoegazer rock for the cement-booted. *Dave Segal*

JOSH ONE NARROW PATH  
MyUtopia/US/CD-DVD

I admit I picked this up for the novelty. It’s one of those dual-disc releases that have a surround sound DVD on one side and a stereo CD on the other. I don’t know why there isn’t more of this stuff. You’d think artists would be racing to create the first surround sound masterpiece. On the upside, we are getting a good amount of smoke room delights like Josh One’s *Narrow Path*. Josh One practically puts the bong in your hand while his chilled-out hip-hop production fills all your speakers and puts you in a mellow, contemplative headspace. *Chachi Jones*

EYVIND KANG & TUCKER MARTINE  
ORCHESTRA DIM BRIDGES  
Conduit/US/CD

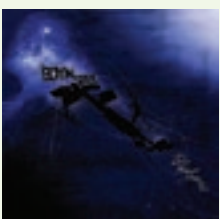
It’s always interesting to hear electronic releases composed by artists who work largely outside the electronic music milieu—they always seem to find different nuances and new approaches to seemingly pedestrian sounds. This collaboration comes from two respected jazz artists, and no doubt there is a strong tendency to hear this album as a jazz release—it’s cool, relaxed, learned and sublime. But surely it’s even better to enjoy its unwavering beauty as an electronic release, similar to World Standard/Wechsel Garland’s *The Isle* (Staubgold) from earlier this year. At the same time, the great songwriting, fresh arrangements, and engrossingly gorgeous takes on what would normally be dull electronic gear use make genre assignments moot. *J. David Marston*



ADA

ADA BLONDIE Areal/GER/CD

Techno is dead! Techno is back! Techno is sexy again! Techno is for ninnies! Whatever it is this week, surely a jazzy tagline exists, replete with a trite summation for Cologne’s new techno-pop princess. But Ada’s too shrewd to let that happen. *Blondie*’s frighteningly proficient grasp of electronics, spatial power and techno’s splintered history makes for a brilliant work free from the isolationist enclaves of a simple genre. Instead, Ada forges a full-fledged artist album, brandishing myriad nuances of instrumentation, vocals and dancefloor flair. Whether it’s the disco shimmy in the corner of “The Red Shoes” or the analog bassline yelps backing a cover of the Yeah Yeah Yeah’s “Maps” or the electro-airbrushed sunspots of “Les Danseuses,” Ada bootstraps herself into the big leagues; every-one else—not just Madonna—watch your back. *Brion Paul*





**KAREEM NOCTOCROMAS**  
**Zhark/GER/CD**

You are in an elevator. In a submarine. The elevator is descending, well below what you know to be the sub's lowest floor. Your ears are getting tight. Your head is starting to feel the ultimate ice cream headache. The sound of bending metal, popping bubbles, exploding air pockets and cracking ice begin to invade your personal space. Finally the elevator stops, thrusting you out into a world of frigid water that sucks the life out of you, pushing you down, down, down. Peace at last. *Ken Micallef*

**KAZI THE PLAGUE**  
**Brick 9000/BEL/CD**

After a solid run of singles and guest appearances, Stones Throw affiliate and Oxnard representative Kazi finally comes through with his debut full-length, joining forces with European label B9000. Produced primarily by Oh No (Kankick contributes one joint), *The Plague* overflows with swiftly paced wordplay and thumping, weed-friendly beats. "Check It Out Remix" is a highlight, with its backwards loops, clapping drums, ample tam-bourine shakes and strong Wildchild cameo, as is "Sick With The Art," a collabo featuring hometown homies Medaphoar and Declaime. While far from classic, this will definitely appeal to fans of the Cali indie-rap scene. *Brolin Winning*



**L'ALTRA**

**L'ALTRA DIFFERENT DAYS** **Hefty/US/CD**

Melancholy and bittersweet, this album is a midwinter night's dream. Following two albums as a band, Chicago's Joe Costa and Lindsay Anderson stripped L'altra down to just the two of them, their songwriting, and their shared history of a seven-year romantic relationship that is no longer. With Costa's delicate guitar and Anderson's haunting Wurliitzer forming the core, producer Josh Eustis (Telefon Tel Aviv) adds judicious doses of electronic sheen and instrumental details (bass clarinet, strings) to create an elegant album where melodies are inevitable and soaring crescendos unavoidable. *Different Days* doesn't waste a note, with careful song sequencing building through a series of peaks to the triumphant "Morning Disaster." Here Anderson and Costa are joined by voices and horns that shine with the hope of a new beginning. *Peter Nicholson*

**KREIDLER EVE FUTURE RECALL**  
**Wonder/GER/CD**

On *Eve Future Recall*, Kreidler doesn't create songs so much as he creates characters from a film noir. The sinister tone of "Cervantes" is warmed with the melodies of deep keys (the con man with a weakness for honest women), and through the spry xylophone of "Whom The Bells Tolls" seeps an undercurrent of hesitation and unspoken hope (the cynical woman with a penchant for bad boys). The crescendo of buzzing strings on "The Park" pulls the plot together (the thugs on their trail finally catch up). Meanwhile, the lullabies in between tell their love story and predict their epitaphs. *Carla Costa*

**DAVID LAST THE PUSH PULL**  
**theAgriculture/US/CD**

My bodiless head floated gently through refreshing, unfamiliar air. I saw Jamaica, China, Java, Tokyo, Venice, Paris...it all meshed into one uncharted terrain, and I didn't know where I was. But I loved it! Brooklyn's David Last blessed me with this multicolored dream on his debut album—psychedelically cartoonish instrumentals awash with blip-hoppin' broken beats and slippery funkydunkyness. Last lures you in with slow-paced dancehall and illbient chaos powered by echoing reverbs, rich basslines, scrunched sounds and quirky melodies. *Push Pull* is playfully dubby like Lee Perry, charmingly IDM like Plaid, and downright heady in the fashion of labelmates DJ Olive and Lloop. *Sean O'Neal*



**GALT MACDERMOT IN FILM**  
**Kilmarnock/US/LP**

Two types of people know Galt MacDermot: dramafags and crate diggers. A prolific composer and arranger, he's done it all, from *Hair* to the *Benny Hill Show* to a string of Cotton flicks. And while one generation knows him for letting their hair down and the sunshine in, another knows Busta's "Whoo Hah!" hook which was lifted from MacDermot's "Pace." Ironically, this South Africa-raised white guy was totally hip to the black sounds of rebellion and freedom; and while the samples may have provided some great MTV tunes, the uncut Hammond-Leslie trills and buzzing guitars give you a glimpse at a groovy heart. *Daniel Siwek*

**MACHINE DRUM BIDNEZZ**  
**Merck/US/CD**

Travis Stewart's third and best album as Machine Drum proves why IDM-centric hip-hop heads adore him. Without coming off as a biter, he melds the best traits of Boards Of Canada, Push Button Objects, Autechre and Dabrye into tracks of elegant complexity and Ph(LS)D-level beat programming. *Bidnezz* displays Stewart's virtuosic use of DSP, scrambling hip-hop's DNA and sprinkling equal doses of glamour and grit into its rhythm matrices. Some hip-hop producers' tracks are simply too bizarre and disorienting to spit over—such is the case with Machine Drum's alien-funk creations. Long may he warp hip-hop's templates. *Dave Segal*

**MICHAEL MAYER TOUCH**  
**Kompakt/GER/CD**

Those familiar with the Kompakt "sound" will find Michael Mayer's debut LP a pleasant (if not terribly original) listen. *Touch* combines elements of techno, house, electro, and—dare I say it—progressive into a user-friendly, non-threatening mélange. Deep-house single "Privat" and the Lil' Louis-echoing "Neue Luthersche Fraktur" are both solid tracks, but the standouts come later, Though awkwardly named, "Funky Haddicap" is far from it—heroin strings and warbly Em-u-sampled basslines meet pre-pubescent vocals over a lush, chugging rhythm. "Amabile" is one of those triplet-beat tracks that has been appearing lately—pulsating, hypnotic, and unabashedly digital, it is by far the best moment on this album. Given a chance, this LP may *Touch* you after all. *Alex Poehl*

**MISS TK AND THE REVENGE XOXO**  
**Gern Blandsten/US/CD**

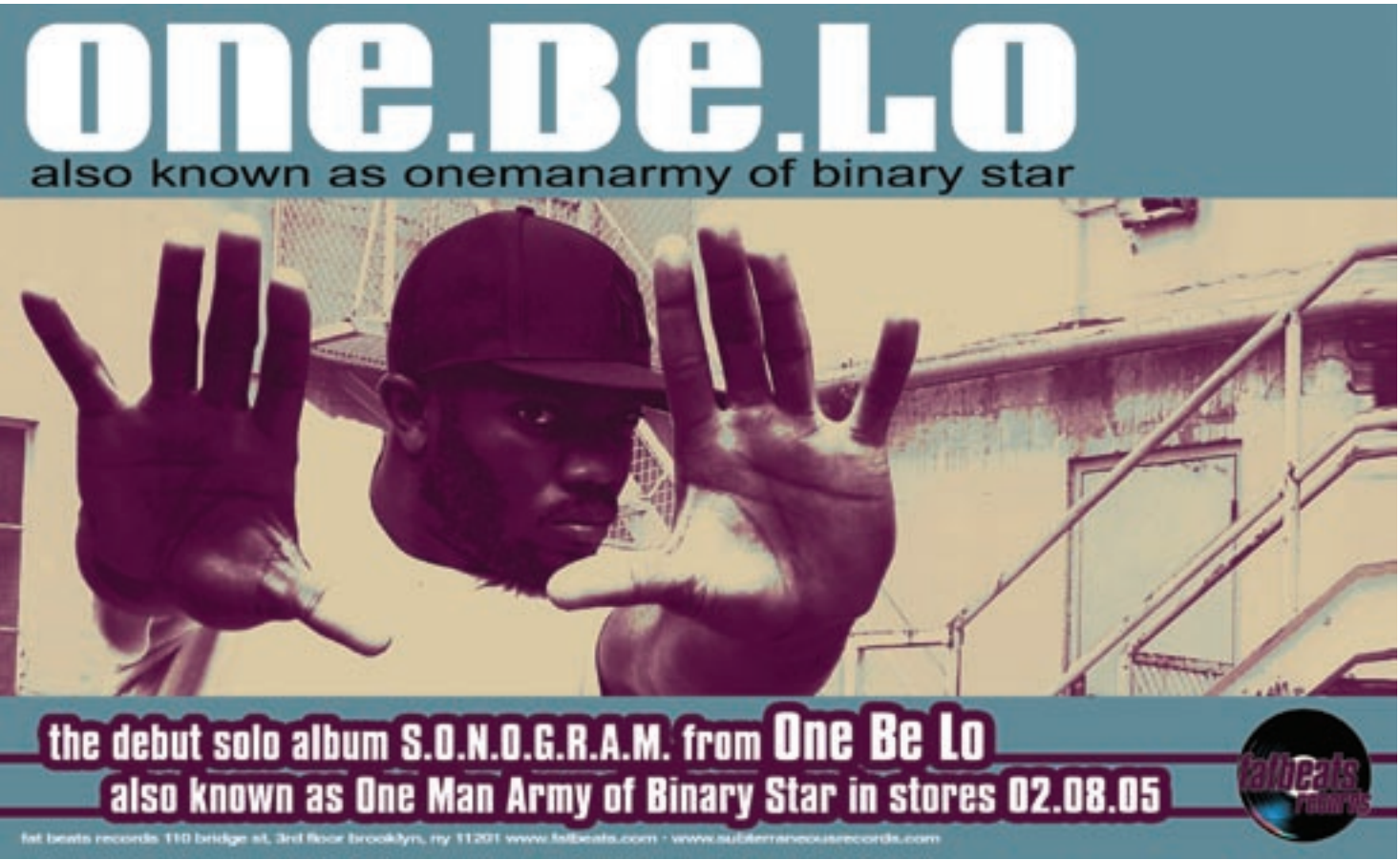
Miss TK doesn't just evoke the rebellious Valley girl über-teen of the '80s, she recreates it—leather jacket, unicorn fetish and all. CasioTone pogo beats lay the base for her vivacious vocal melodies and coy lyrics. Looped, jangly guitar lines are the chatter of girlfriends or the sound of the get-ready-go-out frenzy, but it's Miss TK's total lack of pretension that lets her unadulterated devotion to bedroom dancing to disco shine through. Like a love letter from the coolest girl in junior high, signed *XOXO*. *Carla Costa*

**MOCKY ARE + BE**  
**Fine/UK/CD**

*Are + Be* has an '80s slow-jam vibe crashing straight into the kiddie rave and stumbling out the back door onto a grimy London alley. Or maybe it's an alley in Berlin, as that's where this ex-Canadian kicks it with old friends Peaches and Gonzales. Following his debut *In Mesopotamia* (equally abnormal, groovier flow), Mocky takes the piss out of commercial R&B. But he also hits a nerve with cheeky dichotomies of sweet soul and distorted pop, funk rhythms and fucked-up beats, swift rhymes and lumbering raps. Gravy it ain't, but the saucy blend is worth dipping' your bread in. *Liz Cordingley*

**MOS DEF THE NEW DANGER**  
**Geffen/US/CD**

Mos Def isn't a hip-hop artist, he's simply an artist, no other adjectives attached. *The New Danger* takes the history of American black music and makes it an indistinguishable collage. Alongside an incredible backing band (Will Calhoun, Doug Wimbish, Bernie







## SUPASTITION

**SUPASTITON THE DEADLINE** Soulspazm/US/LP  
Following his 2002 debut, *7 Years of Bad Luck*, North Carolina emcee Supastition returns with another collection of highly personal rhymes set to thumping, sample-heavy production. Relatively short at just 10 tracks, *The Deadline* shines regardless. “Fountain of Youth” finds Supa reflecting on the realities of growing older and more jaded, riding smooth vibraphones and horns. “Homecoming” flips dusty snares and mellow chimes, playing as an ode to his hometown, while “If I Knew” sports autobiographical verses over the mellow piano line Nas and CNN rocked on “Calm Down.” Another standout is the triumphant, bell-laced anthem “Step Up.” Assisted by strong beats from an assortment of talented up-and-comers, Supa delivers another quality album, flexing a real-life lyrical style comparable to BK vet Masta Ace. *Brolin Winning*

Worrell, Dr. Know), Def perfects rock (“Zimzallabim”), blues (“Blue Black Jack”), soul (“The Panties”) and spirituals/funk (“Modern Marvel”). When he does dip into the rap game, he’s as strong as ever: The tribal, percussive first single “Sex, Love & Money” and crackling, vintage sound of “Grown Man Business” prove he hasn’t gone anywhere—he’s merely matured beyond recognition. *Derek Beres*

## THE OCTOPUS PROJECT ONE TEN HUNDRED THOUSAND MILLION

**Peek-A-Boo Industries/US/CD**  
A world designed in encrypted codes and cyber architecture is just too much for some of us to handle. The Octopus Project isn’t willing to trade in their drum kit and guitar pedals for computer concertos just yet and, for the most part, it’s to their advantage. The sound of *One Ten Hundred Thousand Million* amplifies with each track, layering trebled out keys and reverb-heavy guitars over the tick of high-hat stutters, blurring the line between the organic and synthetic with their penchant for lo-fi recording. What’s missing is the hi-fi mixing that’d make their style more decisive. *Carla Costa*

## JEFF PARKER THE RELATIVES

**Thrill Jockey/US/CD**  
In a move that would delight followers of the Theory of Advancement, *The Relatives*—Chicago’s Most

Versatile Player and Tortoise guitarist Jeff Parker’s second outing as a leader—sounds like a modern version of a pre-*Give Me the Night* George Benson album. With its surprisingly accessible sound, John McEntire substituting for Creed Taylor and an almost Sun Ra-esque version of Marvin Gaye’s “When Did You Stop Loving Me, When Did I Stop Loving You,” Parker has created what jazz has needed for a long time: a populist record with enough substance for the haughtiest jazz snob and enough style to keep it interesting. *Nick Follett*

## LEE PERRY AND THE WHITE BELLY RATS

**PANIC IN BABYLON**  
**Moll-Selekta/GER/CD**  
While somewhat obscure, Lee Perry’s recent collaborations with Mad Professor on his London-based Ariva Sounds have produced some of the Upsetter’s most compelling tracks since the ’70s. This spotty collaboration with New York City’s White Belly Rats isn’t as inspiring, but, as with any Perry release, it has moments of sheer genius. The Rats’ often rock-influenced dub creations make for an odd if relatively soulless foundation, but Lee is as on as ever, putting hexes on George Bush and Chris Blackwell, and on more than one track. “Have a Perry salad/For this is Perry ballad.” *Jeosé Serwer*

## THE PREFECTS ARE AMATEUR WANKERS

**Acute/US/CD**  
The Prefects’ most poignant moment is 13 seconds long. It was caught at a 2001 reunion gig where front-man Robert Lloyd mutters about running to the VD clinic; the rhythm section stumbles after him and before anyone figures out what’s happening, the song ends. “VD” could summarize the band’s legacy. The Prefects were Manchester blokes who cranked out a slightly autistic case of The Buzzcocks, earned The Clash’s contempt, made no money, got bored and quit. However, this compilation of singles and unreleased tapes shows that the band deftly mastered the jagged and obtuse sound later tagged “post-punk.” Thank goodness they were “amateur wankers.” *Cameron Macdonald*

## SHANK DO

**ANDREW PEKLER**  
**NOCTURNES, FALSE DAWNS & BREAKDOWNS**  
**Nonplace/GER/CD**  
Germans have an uncanny knack for minimal dub and that even applies to Shank, Berlin’s six-piece improvisational jazz group. Producer Burnt Friedman captured their jam session on his hard drives and resculpted what became a mind-bending masterpiece. *Do* bubbles and sways with haunting experimentalism and bluesy, hard-to-reach ambience through warm digital effects. Then again, Andrew Pekler, a Berlin transplant from California, is a loner that provides soft, hissy, crackly, dusty, digitized jazz. *Nocturnes...* lethargically grooves with half-open eyes while it’s soothingly disorienting and hypnotically loop, oozing with ghostly live instruments and spliced rhythms. Both albums brilliantly intermix the analog and digital worlds. *Sean O’Neal*

## JOHN TEJADA LOGIC MEMORY CENTER

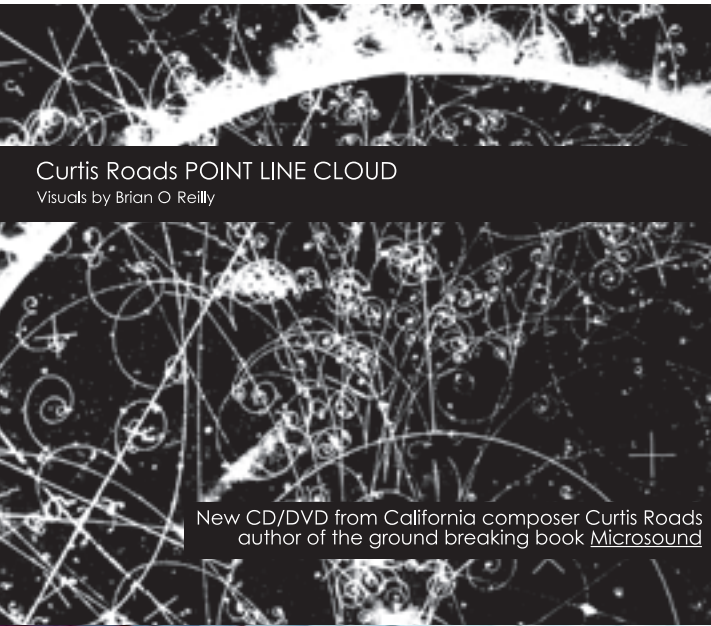
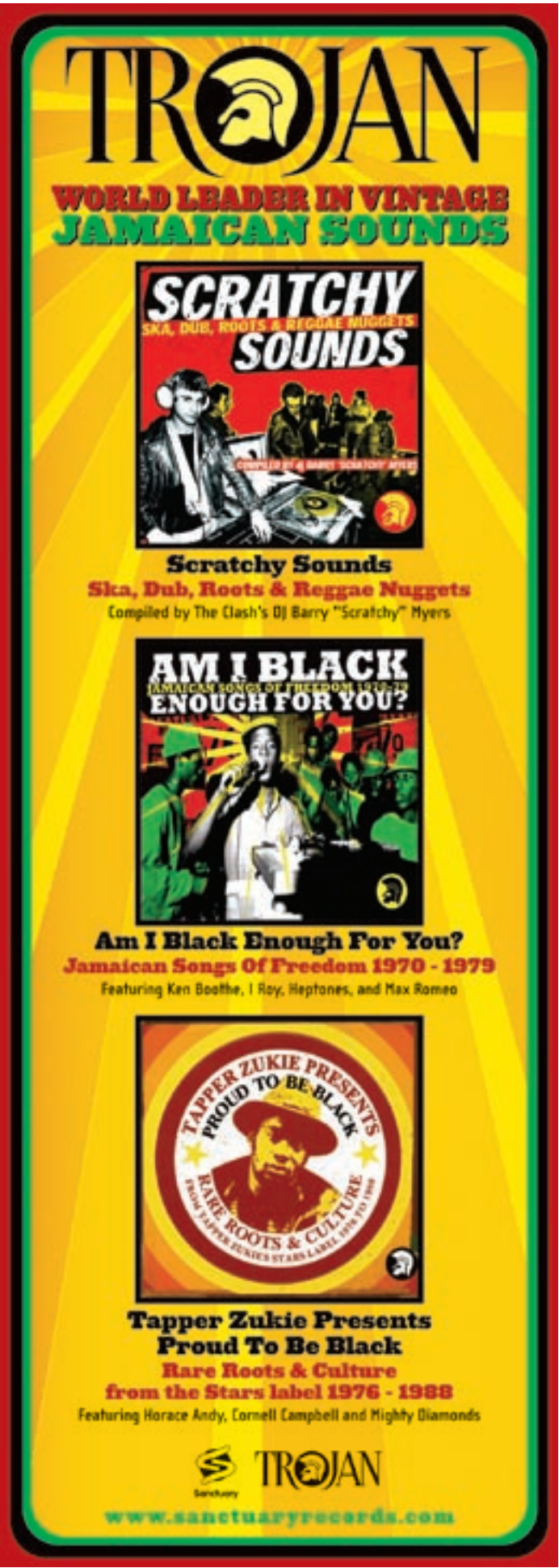
**Plug Research/US/CD**  
LA’s multi-faceted John Tejada never merely goes forward. Expanding from 2003’s *Fairfax Sake* (Playhouse), Tejada’s 10th full-length, *Logic Memory Center*, offers less synthesizers and focuses more on meticulously quirky sound construction. This is deep, well-polished minimal techno for the dancefloor. Ten shuffly throbbers evoke the low-end muddling of Ricardo Villalobos, the cartoony sound-splicing of Akufen, the lighthearted swing of Matthew Herbert and the glossily digitized mini-funk of Steve Bug and Jeff Samuel. Three tracks are graced with gentle, heartfelt vocals from Kimi Recor (Invisibles), Jimmy Tamborello (Dntel, Postal Service) and Carl A. Finlow (Random Factor, Silicon Scally). *Sean O’Neal*

## TELEPHONE JIM JESUS

**A POINT TOO FAR TO ASTRONAUT**  
**PEDESTRIAN VOLUME ONE: UNINDIAN SONGS**  
**Anticon/US/CD**  
Think of these discs as the Lil’ Kims of their genres: short but stacked. The two albums have widely divergent styles—Jesus crafts re-imagined samples, tinkling pianos and synthesizers for a mood-driven album that stretches toward the transcendent, while Pedestrian mixes rap, spoken word and song into a strident hip-hop take on tough intellectual turf (dig the Nixon and Condi Rice references). But both share brevity (each clocks in at under an hour, packed with short tracks), a breadth of sound that keeps the sound ultimately cohesive and a high bar that they meet often but not always. *Luciana Lopez*

## RICARDO VILLALOBOS

**THE AU HAREM D’ARCHIMEDE**  
**Perlon/GER/CD**  
Glitch and girth music is all too often like a band of bugs hitting you up for spare change. You see them coming, you try to look away, but before you know it the music is zapping your head and your pockets are emptied. Ricardo Villalobos builds on this cycle, making music that is surprisingly elastic and warm yet still full of brain zappers that will keep yours ears perked. “Hello Hallo” is liquid and lusty; “Miami” is oddly impersonal; “Temenarc 1” recalls elevator sex with a stranger: fast, tight, abrupt, satisfying. *Ken Micallef*



Curtis Roads POINT LINE CLOUD  
Visuals by Brian O Reilly

New CD/DVD from California composer Curtis Roads  
author of the ground breaking book *Microsound*



Philip Jeck & Janek Schaefer  
**Songs for Europe**  
(Piosenki dla Europy)

*Songs for Europe* paint[s] portraits of Athens and Istanbul  
by treading deserted streets and trying to reanimate those  
lanes and avenues with their recordings.  
- Pitchfork



DACM: Stéréotypie

NEW MUSIC FROM  
PETER REHBERG [PITA] AND TUJIKO NORIKO



# don't sleep

**Louie Vega**  
**Elements of Life: Extensions**

The much-anticipated companion album to **Elements of Life**. Extensions includes remixes from **Joe Clausell**, **Masters at Work**, **DJ Spinna**, **Jazzy Jeff**, **Kenny Dope**, **DJ Gregory** and more as well as five new original songs from **Louie Vega**. Hailed as "The Quincy Jones of dance music" (BPM), Louie Vega is a true Master at Work.

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**Pete Rock**  
**The Surviving Elements**  
From Soul Survivor II Sessions

Like Petestrumentals, The Surviving Elements is a testament to Pete Rock's love of the groove: a homage to a craft endangered by saturation, sample clearance legislation and pop crossover appropriation. Lean back, rhyme over it and spread the word!

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## NEW YEAR NU-SKOOL BREAKS

**Lee Coombs**

Lee Coombs delivers his eagerly anticipated debut artist album, tearing through a torrid throng of musical genres. Features collaborations with Dylan Rhymes, Christian J, Andy Gardner (Plump DJs) and Jem Panufnik (Soul Of Man).

**Soul of Man**  
**Y4K**

The mighty Soul Of Man take you on a funk-fuelled journey laced with the party vibe that these two have been delivering all around the world. Includes exclusive unreleased tracks and mixes from the likes of some of breakbeat's finest producers including Elite Force, Meat Katie, and the Drummatic Twins - and of course Soul of Man themselves.

**Circus & Chibuku**  
**Yousef & Krafty Kuts**

Two of the UK's most popular DJ's and club nights join forces to make a one of a kind mix album bringing House and Breaks together on two CD's. Features tracks and mixes from Gary Numan, Felix Da Housecat, Rennie Pilgrem, Freestylers, and Freq Nasty.

out 01.25.05

**the trip** created by **snow patrol**

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# COMP REVIEWS 01.05

**SOULHEAVEN PRESENTS JAZZY**  
**JEFF IN THE HOUSE**  
Defected/UK/2xCD

**NEW WAVE DISCO**  
United/NETH/CD

**BUGNOLOGY**  
Poker Flat/GER/CD

**SAN FRANCISCO SESSIONS 5**  
Om/US/CD

▲ JT Donaldson and Lance Desardi

and pairing them with modern production sensibilities. Lig's "Fast Walk on Broadway" is particularly strong, building from moody chords to sprightly strings to a strutting synth crescendo.

As a computer-aided mix with plenty of custom edits, Steve Bug's *Bugnology* is obviously built more for the dancefloor, and what a darkly glamorous dancefloor it is. While he, too, doesn't mind a look over his shoulder (check the Chicago-esque TB-303 burble of Sasse's "Soul Sounds"), Bug hurls electro into a dystopian future, where queasy synths menace on Patrick Chardronnet's "Ledge" and gritty bass pulses beneath ticking time-bomb percussion on Boogie Drama's "Zardoz." In addition to being an excellent DJ set (even if no turntables were used), *Bugnology* is an outstanding sample of producers like I:Cube and Justus Köhncke, who may have plenty of new wave in their collections but produce thoroughly modern tunes.

In contrast to *Bugnology* and *NWD*'s unified sound, *SF Sessions 5* is a mixed bag. JT Donaldson programmed the first disc, and while it's an adequate taster—including his own nicely chopped "Trust Me" and Brett Johnson's chugging rework of Shuri-Kan's "Generations"—Lance Desardi simply blows it off the map when it's his turn. With stellar programming and inventive mixes, Desardi leads a twisted journey to the freaky side of house. From the quivering bass of Josh Wink's take on Stefan Goldmann's "Shimmer" (which also appears on *Bugnology*) to the sleazy grind of Jacob London's re-rub of "We Can Funk" by Alexander East, Desardi showcases a house aesthetic informed by the industrial sounds of his youth, avoiding the clichés of "sexy house" in favor of dirty business for nasty heads. At 25, Desardi is part of house's next generation, and if this mix is an indication of where it's headed, I'm definitely sticking around for the ride. *Peter Nicholson*



## JANUARY 2005 RELEASES



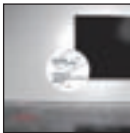
**LAND SHARK**  
SLIPPAGE  
COCO MACHETE



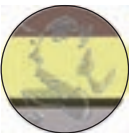
**DJ FREESTYLE & TONE CONTROL**  
I WANT YOU  
GRAB



**SOUTH SOUTH**  
BRONX FEAT  
RAZOR CAIN  
GIVE IT TO ME  
SHABOOM



**DIRTY KICKS**  
GET YOUR KICKS  
GALLERY



**JOHN LARNER & SLATER HOGAN**  
MOVIN' OUR WAY  
ODDS & ENDS



**PAL JOEY**  
LOOP D' LOOP #18  
LOOP D' LOOP



**PRINS THOMAS**  
DISCOMIKS  
RONG PROMO  
ONLY



**JOVONN FEAT STACI T SMITH**  
IT ALWAYS COMES  
NEXT MOOV



**SLUM SCIENCE**  
CLOWN'S POCKET  
GREENHOUSE

## FEBRUARY 2005 RELEASES



**BRETT JOHNSON**  
MY CASIO (LAVISH  
HABITS RMX)  
ICON



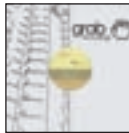
**HOUSE CONDUCTOR**  
TONIGHT I'M  
GONNA LOVE YOU  
CABARET



**LAVISH HABITS**  
CLAP YO FEETZ  
SELECT



**BLAKKAT FEAT NATALIE ARNOLD**  
CAN'T GET  
THROUGH  
SHABOOM



**EDMUND**  
FUSION OF  
SOUNDS  
GRAB



**MILES MAEDA**  
GIVE ME LOVE  
ODDS & ENDS



**DJ ROMAIN FEAT DARYL D. BONNEAU**  
IT'S THE SPIRIT  
NU FAZE



**DJ HARRY**  
AQUARIUM MAN  
RONG



**DJ MOUSE**  
INVITATION  
CASA DEL SOUL



**KEMDI**  
STILL A DANCER  
(ALIX ALVAREZ  
RMX)  
COCO SOUL



AQUARIUS ROCK: THE HIP REGGAE WORLD OF HERMAN CHIN LOY  
Pressure Sounds/UK/CD

The proprietor of Kingston record shop Aquarius and the Aquarius and Scorpio labels, producer Herman Chin Loy was one of the first members of Jamaica's large Chinese and mixed-race Asian population to leave his mark on reggae music. The original "Augustus Pablo," Chin Loy bequeathed that name unto Horace Swaby and his melodica, with whom he carved the legacy of funky reggae and dub mined here. While any reggae student should have a good number of these tracks in their collection, rare versions like The Teacher's "Soul Vibration" and Herman's "Aquarius Dub" could give the Soul Jazz people some competition for the year's best archival reggae compilation. *Jessie Serwer*

AT HOME IN A FRAGILE STATE  
Slip 'n' Slide/UK/CD

Fragile State—both the collaboration and the headspace—is the former project of Zero 7's Neil Cowley and producer/journalist Ben Mynott. Now Mynott goes solo with a home-listening compilation of largely unknown artists—a testament to the years Mynott spent as a music writer. His collection simultaneously mines the neo-lounge model and moves beyond it. Fragile State's influence wafts through the Rhodes keyboard lines of "Standstill" (from Zero 7-soundalikes Hardkandy) and the broken beat "Generations." But other tracks catch the ear pleasurably off guard: Digitone's eerie, crystalline

"Seraphim," or "Sailor" by Hem, a teardrop-beautiful vocal lullaby that'll have you reaching for a cup of chamomile tea. *Anna Balkrishna*

BUT THEN AGAIN  
~scape/US/CD

With this fifth anniversary memento, ~scape celebrates transition not as something to go through begrudgingly but rather as an aesthetic in itself for our hyper-paced times. No longer the glitch-dub label of yore, the label now hovers in a galaxy far, far away where hip-hop, minimal techno, dancehall and pop are not seen as mutually exclusive. The results, then, are most often brilliant—tracks by Cappablack, Bus and Dabrye, Headset and Soulo, and Deadbeat in particular—but the refrain on Epo's "Doorstep" is just *atrocious* and it could have stayed on the cutting room floor. Then again, Cappablack's "5th Dimension (Anti-Imperialist Disco)" is worth the price of admission alone. *Alexio Georgopoulos*

CHRONICLES: THE ROOTS OF G-FUNK  
Koch/US/CD

Maybe the reason why Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* "stank" so good was because there was some real soul behind the flow. There are priceless gems all over the G-Funk map, from Wilson Pickett's "Engine Number Nine" (as the inspiration for "Straight Outta Compton") to Leon Haywood's "I Want'a Do Something Freaky To You" (the blueprint for "Ain't Nuttin But a G Thang"). You best believe the original Afonaut, George Clinton, visits as the architect of

"Let Me Ride," but even if you don't listen to hip-hop this collection can stand on its own as a testament to '70s stoned funk. *Daniel Siwek*

CLICKS & CUTS 4  
Mille Plateaux Media/GER/CD

After flirting with bankruptcy, Mille Plateaux Media returns with more tantalizing lab experiments. *Clicks & Cuts 4* features 16 tracks by C&C standbys and interesting newcomers. Slightly more than half the disc consists of dance tracks (by Frank Elting, Eight Frozen Modules, Ultra-Red, Hakan Lidbo, Ido Gouvryn); the producers set up obstacles for themselves so things don't flow too smoothly, creating fascinating friction that enlivens ye olde 4/4. The other half of the album contains mostly involving, eerie headphone ambience that elaborates on the C&C template, with Tilman Ehrhorn and Twerk bringing in some welcome jazz spice. This is a big improvement over 2002's *Clicks & Cuts 3*. *Dave Segal*

FABRICLIVE 18: ANDY C AND DJ HYPE  
Fabric/UK/CD

No room for atmospheric tweaks or liquid vocals here; the latest installment from Fabric, compiled by two of the biggest names in the genre, is as straightforward drum & bass as it gets, with all the regulars present. Krust heats things up with "Follow Da Vision," while DJ Fresh's "Tomb Raider" delivers punchy basslines that seem to slam against one another and Potential Bad Boy's "Submission" intensifies this feeling. Taking the above into consideration, this is a great choice for anyone just wanting a good trip around the dancefloor, but not recommended for the more adventurous. *Jenn Marston*

HYBRID PRESENTS Y4K  
Distinctive/UK/CD

This one's for the masses. UK's Mike Truman and Chris Healings (a.k.a. Hybrid) deliver their first DJ mix compilation ever. *Y4K* is a lush, cinematic joyride through club-storming progressive breakbeats that'll leave you tingling with a gushing heart—chock-full of sci-fi soundscapes, blanketing string arrangements, gut-wrenching basslines and ultra-melodic funky drum patterns. Hybrid gently interweaves a medley of hit club tracks, including FSOL's "My Kingdom," Luke Chable's remix of GusGus' "David," Chemical Brothers' "Chemical Beats," Stereo 8's remix of Orbital's "One Perfect Sunrise," and in closing, Hybrid's own soundtracky rework of "Blackout" by Chicago house legend Lil' Louis. *Sean O'Neal*

MERCK MIX 3  
Merck/US/CD

It is one thing to plagiarize another artist, it's another to *improve* said artist's ideas. Mediocre Autechre and Prefuse 73 imitators still trying to figure out Max/MSP abound, but there are musicians who enliven those mavericks' sketches into graffiti murals that stretch for blocks. Miami glitch-hop label Merck carries such aerosol cans. *Merck Mix 3* amasses the label's roster, delivering beats that crack bones with every step as electro-funk melodies scatter like hummingbirds. Too many sublime moments are interrupted, like the post-Neptunes bounce of Aphilas' "Collective Memory Loss" and Ilkae's narcotic Tokyo lounge in "Scarlet." Otherwise, the disorientation pleases. *Cameron Macdonald*

NICKY SIANO'S LEGENDARY THE GALLERY  
Soul Jazz/UK/CD

To understand the music of The Gallery is to understand the club with which it is inextricably linked. Although thought of as a discothèque, The Gallery didn't play "disco" music. Instead, DJ/owner Nicky Siano bridged the gap sonically and historically between the two other monoliths of the time: David Mancuso's The Loft and Larry Levan's Paradise Garage. The spaced-out epics of The Loft gave way to The Gallery's harder, four-on-the-floor feel, which developed out of Detroit sounds—mainly by Norman Whitfield (The Undisputed Truth and The

Temptations)—and the danceable elegance of Philly soul (The Tramps). An early place of employment to then club kids Levan and Frankie Knuckles, the historic significance of The Gallery is as undeniable as the stomping beat of the music. *Nick Follett*

OSUNLADE PRESENTS THE YORUBA SOUL MIXES  
BBE-Rapster /US/CD

A devotee of Yoruba culture, NY-based producer Osunlade offers a broad definition of soul throughout this 12-track remix album. Crafted by his dexterous fingers, the multi-instrumentalist and spiritual wanderer gives a gorgeous touch to Mali's "Golden Voice," Salif Keita, and wittingly lifts Cape Verdean Césaria Évora's *morna* from the deep blues. Further facelifts to Roy Ayers and Shazz add solid grooves to sweet melodies, but when tweaking cuts by Keziah Jones, Spacek and 4hero, his soul light plunges existing mediocrity into further abyss. *Derek Beres*

PHILA FLAVA PRESENTS A LEAGUE OF OUR OWN VOLUME 2  
Vintage/US/CD

Assembled by Phila Flava honcho Jason Gloss, *A League of Our Own Vol. 2* sports 20 tracks and features over 30 different artists, some of whom are familiar names, others not so much. Like most compilations, it's pretty hit or miss, though there are some serious bangers on here. Planet Asia delivers a true gem with "Ball Till You Fall," QN5 succeeds at the difficult task of hip-hop comedy/parody on "Commercial Rap," and "Veteran's Day" featuring Dave Ghetto, Breez Evahflowin, Pumpkinhead, and Rok One is outstanding. There's definitely some skippable material in the mix, but the good stuff is top-notch. *Brolin Winning*

RENEGADES OF FUNK VOL. 3 (MIXED BY HOLDTIGHT)  
Renegade/UK/CD  
PARANOIA PT 2: THE SEQUEL (MIXED BY KEATON)  
Renegade Hardware/UK/CD

TOV spans its wings wide with multiple labels that satisfy the hardest of heads to the sassiest of shakers. Listening to *Paranoia Pt. 2: The Sequel* directly after *Renegades of Funk Vol. 3* is like lifting yourself up, just to get smacked back down. Holdtight mixes the bubbling beats and basslines of Renegade's most recent back catalog (by the likes of Basic Operations, The Insiders and Mouly) and conjures up those feel-good-vibes, while Keaton calls upon sinister friends Raiden, Hive, Loxy and Ink, and blends their abrasive bangers to knock you right out. Bring it on. *Ryan Romana*

REWIND! 4  
Ubiquity/US/CD

This annual series of transformed vintage soul, reggae and R&B has become a classic itself. Chapter four opens with Sharon Jones and Lee Fields making funky "This Land is Your Land" and never has Woody Guthrie's folk staple glared with such luster. Like the previous three, *Rewind! 4* is a mixed bag, but the strength and uniqueness of certain cuts makes it worthwhile. Willis' soulful rendition of Cameo's "Word Up!" rules, and a meticulous cover of the White Stripes' "7 Nation Army" by Nostalgia 77 takes garage rock out of the head and adds heart. The only rule is to sound old and, obviously, funky. Sometimes a step back really is a few forward. *Derek Beres*

RUN THE ROAD  
679/UK/CD

A gutter-spawned hybrid of Playstation beats and MCs spitting an acerbic spray of British and patois slang, *Run The Road* showcases 16 top-shelf tunes of Frankenstein-ian glitch-hop garage (a.k.a "grime"). With highlights including Terror Danjah's anthemic "Cockback V1.2," Mercury-man Dizzee Rascal's "Give U More," "Let It Out" by Roll Deep and the vry humor of "Cap Back" by Wonder & Plan B, this compilation is equal parts youthful braggadocio and sonic



thuggery. From the streets—this is music to riot to. *DeepSix*

SOPHIE RIMHEDEN: H2-FI  
Mitek/GER/CD

Stockholm's Sophie Rimheden garnered mad props for her 2003 debut album, *Hi-Fi*, where she provided happy glitch-pop and '80s-influenced bleepy electro-funk powered by her charming, Madonna-like voice. *H2-Fi* is a varied hodgepodge of *Hi-Fi* remixes staying true to Rimheden's peculiar lightheartedness. The revamping commences with spliced-up, videogame-ish funkadelia by Pavan, Håkan Lidbo and Tigerbeat6's Dwayne Sodahberk. Remixes by Static and Hundarna från Söder parallel the dark electro of Kraftwerk's "Trans-Europe Express." Different and Son of Clay drone out crackles and beatless serenity, followed by minimal techno masterpieces from Johan Skugge and Shitkatapult's Fenin. The 14-tracker ends with driving, club-storming cheese by Sam Miller and Puss. *Sean O'Neal*

TIGHTY TIGHTY  
Greensleeves/UK/CD  
STEPZ  
VP/US/CD

Renaissance Crew is the production team behind the new Stepz riddim, reminiscent of 2003's Good



MICHAEL MAYER

SPEICHER CD2 Kompakt/GER/CD

Germany's Kompakt label has crashed headlong into the seam between micro-house and pop as of late, but the *Speicher* series takes the label back to its roots on the dancefloor. *Speicher CD2* compiles entries from the *Speicher 12"* series of minimalist stompers, which are aimed at the deepest, darkest corners of the dance hall. A brief spoken intro (in German, naturally) sets a nocturnal, epic tone, and an hour-plus of beats supports that feeling. *Speicher CD2* could easily slip into background ambience, but mixer Michael Mayer keeps the surprises coming even as his transitions remain laser-smooth. DJ Koze's smashing "Brutalga Square" mixes into Blitz's digital sports arena theme "Are You Ready to Rock," while the last third of the mix is conquered by the spring-loaded *schaffel* sound. Koze again provides the highlight with "Der Sager Von St Georg," a buzzing round of shuffling punishment as electric as a downed wire. *Rob Geary*

To Go (both feature 4/4 acoustic guitar strums and an uptempo drum pattern). Stepz works well for singers and DJs, but it's Assassin who comes out on top with "Idiot Thing That." Bounty Killer's "Killing A Killing" also comes off and Spragga Benz returns to classic form on "Done See It." Producer Donovan "Vendetta" Bennett (creator of Good To Go) returns to his own successful acoustic guitar formula on his new riddim Tighty Tighty. The handclaps and tabla accents make this uptempo version perfect for vocalists like Wayne Wonder ("Reasons"), T.O.K. ("Shake Your Body") and Tami ("Tell Me"). *Ross Hogg*

WORLD DUB PASTRY  
Music for Dreams/DEN/CD

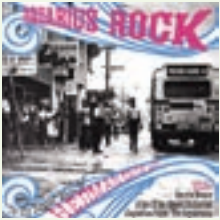
Focused on the obscure (but growing) Balearic dub scene, label head Kenneth Bager drops this compilation from his record bag goody list. A mish-mash of tech-heavy minimalist electronica dosed with videogame worthy bleeps, the vision is a dreamscape filled with world dub influences. Overall, the comp is a mixed bag, with repetitively mediocre cuts alongside solid tracks from 2 Raumwohnung, Banzai Republic and Tomzen. The highlight is Joe Dukie & DJ Fitchie refreaking their incredible live outfit, Fat Freddy's Drop, from organic Rastafarianism into digital Nyabingi. *Derek Beres*



CEDRIC IM BROOKS

STUDIO ONE FUNK Soul Jazz/UK/CD

This inspired collection focuses on an obscure, but fertile, time in Jamaican musical history. Back in 1966-72, reggae was just starting to emerge from the rocksteady and ska eras and hadn't yet solidified into the heavy roots vibe, which would carry it through the next decade. At the same time, American soul and R&B were undergoing a psychedelic osmosis that ultimately evolved into full-fledged funk, and had a greater influence on Jamaica than previously assumed. *Studio One Funk* captures this transitory period with some interesting juxtapositions: skanking guitars spar with James Brown-esque yelps on Delroy Wilson's "Funky Broadway"; Cedric IM Brooks tackles Isaac Hayes' "Shaft"; Alton Ellis turns in a slice of steady-rockin' soul over the "Westbound Train" riddim on "African Descendants"; and the Underground Vegetables transport Booker T & the MG's boogaloo to Kingston on "Melting Pot," which is what this album of rare, yet still percolating, grooves represents. *Eric K. Arnold*





**HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS:**  
**DEMARKUS LEWIS**

From deep in the middle of the country—Dallas, Texas, to be exact—DJ/producer DeMarkus Lewis runs the deep house scene. In the last 14 years, his kicking tunes—with big basslines of the Boo Williams, Derrick Carter and DJ Diz variety—have appeared on crucial labels around the country and the globe including Brique Rouge, Nordic Trax, Loveslap and hometown favorite Fair Park. When Lewis isn’t turning out hot numbers for the 4/4 lovers, he runs the Grin Music booking agency with his wife and fellow DJ, Kelle Marie, and holds down residencies at Zubar and The Pharmacy. Despite being busy coming up with new track titles, Lewis found time to give us a few words on the best new American house tunes. *Vivian Hoot*  
www.grinmusic.com

**RASOUL SINCE YOU’VE BEEN GONE** *Vista/US/12*  
Rasoul comes with it with this top choice four-track EP. “Since You’ve Been Away” kicks off this masterpiece with a taste of old school mid-tempo funk, with subtle bass tones and flanging guitars. “Break Free” hits you over the head with massive swing beats and killer sounds and atmosphere. “Touch” brings it down a notch with the warm instrumentation that only Rasoul can deliver. A must-have for those super deep nights. *DL*

**LAVISH HABITS CLAP YO FEETS** *Select/US/12*  
It’s hard to decide which one to play. The original mix holds it together with an old school vibe reminiscent of 808 State at their best. Flip for the FYF mix, hiding under your covers with nasty vocal spurts and driving percussion. Scott Pace and Paul Paredes work out the final mix, which seems to combine previous forces to create a intoxicating floor-filler. You go boys! *DL*

**TUFFY MOVE ME** *Dae/US/12*  
Alright, alright. This is one of my favs right now. The guys over at Dae got their hands on a solid two-track release. The original mix is definitely for those classic lovers out there with its live disco drums and Moog stabs. Olivier Desmit and Casey bring it home with the smooth Rhodes, grooved out bassline and simple but effective vocal colors. Something to warm you up! *DL*

**LASCIVIOUS SHE’S HERE** *Wave/US/12*  
“She’s Here,” recorded under Pal Joey’s house moniker, is blissed-out house akin to the Kompakt Pop releases that the DJs at Dublab seem to love. Brennan Green’s rework is the real gem here. His unrushed style is as nuanced as ever with a keen ear for small additions, such as a tambourine every 16 bars and the inclusion of a disco bassline, which moves the playtime for this track up from 4 a.m. to 1 a.m. *Nick Follett*

**JUSTIN MARTIN THE BRAZILIAN** *Utensil/US/12*  
Prolific San Franciscan Justin Martin’s punchy tracks have been busting out on labels like Classic, Roam and Buzzin’ Fly, but his latest for Utensil is the EP that’ll have new listeners intrigued. His style can’t easily be classified: “The Brazilian” works the percussive territory of MAW, while B-side “Life” and “Caught Deep” explores Broadway & Wilson or Swirl Peepz’s bouncy, sample-laden territory. Martin handles it all with the confidence of a vet—so keep his name in your Palm for future notice. *Hector Cedillo*

**MYSTIC BILL FIERCE BLACK BITCH** *Select/US/12*  
It’s a great time to be a fan of Chicago house (holla Peter Cetera) with Marshall Jefferson popping back on the radar and the renewed interest in acid. “Fierce Black Bitch” by Trax veteran Mystic Bill relies on the classic acid formula: stripped down and dirty drums and bass and a vocal sample (supplied by disco don Leroy Burgess). Dance music for when dance clubs were dance clubs, not lounges with open space. *Nick Follett*

**IMPOSSIBLE BEINGS TOO LATE—REMIXES** *End/UK/12*  
“Too Late” is late-night discoid house with a seductive female vocal sample and dreamy strings, pads and synths. Brooks ups the grind quotient with his reworking that references tracky acid and funky electro motifs, both keeping it crunchy. Two splendid sides, one splendid rekkid. *Chris Orr*

**ARP SHOW ME** *Top Shelf/US/12*  
After the success of this year’s “Supersonic,” the London/Los Angeles duo Amber Dawn and E-love (a.k.a. ARP) returns to the dancefloor with another electro-funk monster. Think S.O.S. Band meets Daft Punk without the vocoder and way more sex appeal. From the swankiest of clubs to the diviest of dives, expect to hear this everywhere...*a lot.* *TK Dioko*

**BARFLY STREET TALK** *Rong/US/12*  
Hot on the heels of the Muddremix 12” comes three disgustingly ill slabs of disco sleaze brought to you by label honcho Ben Cook and San Fran’s Green Gorilla bad boy (and Rong music newcomer) Anthony Garlic. Killer drums, burly disco beats, womping slap bass and prime-time party vocal snips make this the perfect soundtrack for (very) late-night debauchery. Proper party music for proper party weirdos. *TK Dioko*

**JUSSI PEKKA SUBWAY** *Statra/US/12*  
Tech-house lives! And not the sucky progressive tripe being hammered by Sasha, Van Dyk and Tiësto, but house music with kaleidoscopic synth elements, jabbing bass riffs and smart, shuffling drum loops

(without a snare crescendo in sight). Jussi Pekka delivers two shimmering dubby tracks featuring stripped-down arrangements and mechanic percussion. Subtlety rules the night. *Robert “Boogie” Sheftel*

**DAVID COLEMAN FEAT ROOTZ FIRE THE LARRYS SENSIMILLIA SESSIONS** *Jah Love/US/12*  
Jah Love’s latest two slabs of dubwise house are also the best of their dozen-strong catalog. Coleman’s echo-laden jam features See-I toaster Rootz and conjures Rob Paine (Worship Records), Dreadzone or Smith & Mighty-type vibes throughout. Add works by Dub Theory and Halo and *yu dun know* it’s a mighty sound system burner. The Larrys (Sen-Sei and Naz) “Sensimillia” is a tad simplistic, but remixer Tony Hewitt is able to give it a properly skanking arrangement with plenty of *oomph.* *Tomas*

**GLENN UNDERGROUND/DJ V/DJ ALENA DEEP-ENDING EP** *D’lectable/US/12*  
A trifecta of Chi-town dopeness here, as a legend (Glenn Underground) shares sides with the new school. Glenn pairs his mellow Rhodes-kissed track with spoken word by DJ Charles Matlock, who waxes about the Windy City’s good ol’ days. But the future belongs to hot-handed DJ V’s “What Am I Doing...,” an organic, live bass-underpinned gem, and Alena, whose “Boom Boom” is an apt description of her choppy funk sound. Their fresh ideas reaffirm their city’s status as the home of house. *Hector Cedillo*



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**Feb 18 - Kansas City @ Kabal**  
**Feb 19 - Austin @ Copa Bar**  
**Feb 26 - Toronto @ ARC**  
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TECHNO GUEST  
REVIEWS:  
BORIS DLUGOSCH



Throughout the '90s, Boris Dlugosch was a name on tons of house DJs' lips around the globe, thanks to the 1997 release of 4/4 anthem "Keep Pushin," and his remixes of Moloko's massive "Sing It Back" and Mousse T's "Horny." Over the last few years, Dlugosch (as well as frequent collaborator Michi Lange) has been moving away from pumping main-floor house toward the techno and electro-influenced end of the thump spectrum. On his N-Joy radio show, he frequently drops tracks by the likes of Chicken Lips, Rex the Dog, Jacques Lu Cont and Phonique. Dlugosch's earliest influences in classic electro and funk were revealed last year when he dropped the *Bionic Breaks* compilation (Kontor), an insane 41-track, two-CD megamix of breakdance classics like Tyrone Brunson's "Smurf" and the Russell Brothers' "Party Scene." We caught up with Hamburg-based Dlugosch and had him pick out three electro-techno releases that are rocking his DJ box. *Vivian Hoel*  
[www.housemusic.de](http://www.housemusic.de)

BOYS NOISE THE BOMB Gigolo/GER/12

Another fine tune from Munich's International DeeJay Gigolos label. After the success of tracks like Simian Vs. Justice's "Never Be Alone" and Play Paul's "Lovesong" earlier this year, here is "The Bomb." Boys Noise is a side project of Hamburg's own Kid Alex. *BD*

STEVE BUG LOVERBOY (RE-LOVED) Pokerflat/GER/12

I have been waiting for this record for quite a long time! This is a minimal electro-techno track; for me, the Guido Schneider remix, which is quite close to the original, works the best. You will also find two new mixes by Steve Bug himself. *BD*

CHIKINKI: THE BERLIN SESSIONS  
SOMETHING MORE (TIEFSCHWARZ RMX) Universal/UK/12

Bristol's Chikinki went to Berlin to record some tracks in collaboration with German electro dons Tiefschwarz. The resulting 10-inch features two brand new tracks from the band featuring Ewan Pearson and Tiefschwarz remixes. I prefer the latter. *BD*

SUBSTANCE VOL.2  
Infrastructure/US/12

Dark, headstrong. NY techno rises from the underground on this noteworthy compilation. Function (a.k.a. Dave Sumner) assembles a list of sought out jocks to remix Infrastructure's classic, polyrhythmic 808 cuts. Christian Wwunsch, Olga and Jozef all offer proper shuffled-kick non-conformist reworks. Tastefully experimental but true to the dancefloor. *Praxis*

HUGG & PEPP  
BETONGKEPS EP  
Dahlback/GER/12

If you're searching for enchanting, dynamic melodies backed with penetrating percussion, these two cousins deliver ripe pickings. A garage-style bass groove illuminated with excessive automation develops beneath a string-hazed square wave 303 riff, making for late night music on all levels. Progressive yet steady, this quasi-electro synth funk project maintains groove intention. *Praxis*

DJ EMERSON  
SUCK MY DECK REMIX EP  
Kiddaz.FM/GER/12

With the original release topping charts throughout Europe, Holgi Star now offers powerful remixes from major peak-time players. Hertz chops his reworking into a punchin' bassline banger headed straight for 2 a.m. D.A.V.E. The Drummer stays as consistent as always with his brain-crushing per-

cussive analog infusion. Mixes from Switzerland's Southsoniks and Michael Burkat round the EP out nicely. *Praxis*

ALEX SMOKE  
CHICA WAPPA  
SILICON SOUL  
LES NOCTURNES  
Soma/UK/12

Glasgow's own Alex Smoke makes his debut appearance on this staple UK imprint. Bringing his patented minimalist string-laden industrial sound to the plate, Smoke understands what darkened tonal hues can do to a late night crowd. Silicon Soul moves in the tech-house direction with funky lows, sharp horn hits, mysterious pads and organic percussion. Sealed with a blissful trumpet improvisation, mainstream folks couldn't ask for more. *Praxis*

DEXTER  
THE RAW EP  
Klaxson/GER/12

Four tracks of neo-electro that bring the beats and the pads but not the joy. Detroit and Italo get referenced but the mood is too moody to rock the disco-tech. The last track, "Valve (Live)," throws some Prelude-style keyboard noodling in the mix, but melancholy is as joyful as it gets. Dark times need up music—and this ain't it. *Chris Orr*

2-STEP GUEST  
REVIEWS:  
CHARMZ



Don't let the cute name fool you—Charmzy's tunes are anything but polite. Sublow tracks like "Raid" and "Tec 9" are bass monsters, full of minimal, pounding low-end, poinging snares and searing samples that make you feel like you're trapped inside an apocalyptic 8-bit videogame. Charmzy's been honing his beatmaking since he finished school in 1997, and these days he's part of London's notorious Black Ops crew, alongside ringleader Jon E Cash, DJ Extreme, producers 2 Real and Dread D, and MCs Chaps, Sly, Rider and Capone. They're running the younger end of the UK garage scene, where 4/4 is dead and the beats are best served grimy, son. We stopped Charmzy on his way to pirate station Rinse FM, and asked him what we should look out for in the world of UKG. *Star Eyes*  
[www.dablackops.com](http://www.dablackops.com), [www.rinsefm.com](http://www.rinsefm.com)

J-SWEET FEAT. SARA & D DOUBLE E BURNING UP  
Sweet Beatz/UK/12

A huge vocal track forthcoming on the Sweet Beatz label. It's a change from previous tracks with a female-friendly vocal that has definite crossover appeal. More productions like this will definitely push the boundaries of this genre of music even further. *Charmzy*

DREAD D TIME COMMAND white/UK/12

The man that brought us "Invasion," Dread, has gone from strength to strength—now he has come back with another definite smash. A massive intro combined with an even bigger drop will make this one *the* track for 2005. Watch out for more releases from Dread D in 2005. *Charmzy*

WONDER FACE Dump Valve/UK/12

The latest offering from the man that featured on Dizzee Rascal's album. This one is a darkside future anthem that has already been battered by the likes of Slimzee, Switch and myself. Wonder is one of the best producers out there, so watch out for him in 2005 with some big club bangers. *Charmzy*

S.L.K. FEAT. WONDERKID  
HYPE HYPE  
white/UK/12

As the once-untouchable Social Circles label folds and news breaks that Sticky was robbed of all his studio gear, new hope comes in the form of "Hype Hype." Featuring the vocal talents of S.L.K. and Wonderkid bashing out lyric after lyric over trademark Sticky ruffness, this tune is begging for the rewind. It is big, bad and heavy. Pull up choon. *DeepSix*

GROOVE SKOOL PRECIOUS LOVE  
2tuf 4u/UK/10

Debuting on a premiere label like Karl "Tuff Enuff" Brown's 2tuf 4u imprint may seem daunting at first. But, given the quality of their first effort, it seems Groove Skool may have found a permanent home. Bumpy 4x4 grooves with delicious vocal slices bring to mind other 2tuf stablemates Sugar Beetz. "Precious Love" is a cut above. *DeepSix*

TRUE TIGERS ALLSTARS  
True Tigers/UK/12

With Duncan Powell, Da Phuture, Misty Dubs and Scandalous Unlimited on remix/production duty, this four-track EP is chock full of good, good 4x4 flavor. The R&B-laced cuts will definitely funk 'em up raw and appeal to the crossover crowd. If "Me, Myself, and I" and "Naughty Girl" don't get the ladies dancing, you must be playing at a convent. Not for nuns...sorry, Sisters. *DeepSix*

DIGITAL MYSTIKZ AND LOEFAB  
02 EP  
DMZ/UK/12

Digital Mystikz and Loefah turn out tracks that strip the Rasta-in-space sound of Horsepower Productions back to heavily reverbed drums, slow grinding subs and raw synth blurts. These tracks exemplify the dubstep scene's musical premise—like dinosaurs caught in a tar pit, the beats pull against the glutinous basslines but never quite break free. *Cooper Bethea*

30 HZ EATING THE DEAD  
Vertical Sound/UK/12

With an acid house revival in full swing, we're hearing squelchy Roland TB-303 bass sounds pop-up all over the place—like on "Eating the Dead," a dark, zombie-inspired breakbeat roller. Personally, my ears linger longer on the flipside's "Mike Dyson," featuring stripped down drum arrangements, low-low sub-bass waves, compressed percussion and haunted house screams. Calling all ravers. *Derek Grey*

LETHAL BIZZLE POW  
Relentless/UK/12

This tune is bound to cause a ruckus—in fact, it's been banned from all Essex clubs for just that reason! Lethal Bizzle (of More Fire Crew) makes his production debut with an electro-handclap-spiked string attack, then trades a hot eight bars with 10 (10!) other MCs. Easily the biggest grime tune this year. *Cooper Bethea*

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DRUM & BASS GUEST  
REVIEWS: RONI SIZE

The history of drum & bass bears many milestones with Roni Size's name on them. His 1997 opus as the ringleader of Reprazent, *New Forms*, was undoubtedly many people's introduction to the genre, proving that 170-bpm breakbeats and live bands fit together. Jungle heads didn't need to be told Roni's an innovator—he's produced anthems in every major phase of the music, including ragga (Firefox & 4-Tree's "Warning"), jazzy ("It's A Jazz Thing") and jump up (Gang Related's "Dictation"). That's not to mention his production work with Redman, his Breakbeat Era project and running the Full Cycle label. In November, Roni came back to the fold with an all d&b album, *Return to V* (V Recordings). We caught up with him to find out what tracks he's feeling at the moment. *Star Eyes*  
www.ronisize.com

**EZ ROLLERS FEAT. HEIDI LEVO AND GUSTAVO MARQUES SHOWTIME REMIX** Intercom/UK/12  
Right now, I'm into tunes that make me smile. This tune shows EZ Rollers are back, after taking a hiatus to move into their new studio. They've definitely taken their time programming the break on this one. I can't wait to play this at the new Full Cycle monthly residency in Bristol. The unusual vocals stand out a mile from anything else out there at the moment. This will be out on EZ Rollers' next compilation, *Lickable Beats 2*, which will be out May 2005. *RS*

**TC SO COLD** dub/UK/12  
I'm a real sucker for melodic guitars, and this record shows that there's a lot of life and a lot of love in making music that doesn't necessarily have to be a hit on the dancefloor, but is great to listen to at home. Roll on TC! This is what we call contributing to d&b. *RS*

**LOGISTICS TOGETHER VIP** Hospital/UK/12  
Logistics has made a pretty decent name for himself over the last year, forging a distinctive style, and this track has been absolutely caned back and forth. I reminisce about standing in a field when I hear this—this one is bound to make a few hairs stand up on the back of peoples' heads. Sometimes it's good to give people what they want, and Logistics does just that. *RS*



**SILENT WITNESS JUMP GATE** DNAudio/UK/12  
Silent Witness returns to his own DNAudio label with the futuristic "Jump Gate," taking you through spiraling sound tunnels and dropping you off into amorphous bass tones and scattered drum programming to impressive results. On the other hand, "Amazon" beautifully builds into a dirty funky piece, but gets stale way too quickly. *Ryan Romana*

**DAVIDE CARBONE & KUBIKS FRISCO DISCO** Industry/UK/12  
Lesser-known producers Davide Carbone and Kubiks combine to flex their collective muscle on this Industry twelve. "Frisco Disco" lightly blows through lush keys, sweet vocals and subtly seductive bass, but with enough stomp to keep it from suffering from Kenny G syndrome. The flip, "My Thing," also melts jazz, soul, and funk elements together with a nice downtempo breakdown halfway through. *Ryan Romana*

**LOGISTICS MILLIONAIRE** Innerground/UK/12  
Logistics continues to push his soulful rollers from one quality label to the next. "Millionaire" makes its mark on Innerground with cushion-warming synths that weave in and out of low-end frequencies and tickling vocal clips resulting in pure musical momen-

tum. Don't ignore "Front to Back" as it also moves through funk-infused flavor and is strictly for the liquid lovers. *Ryan Romana*

**TUBBY T READY SHE READY (PHOTEK RMX)** 51st State/UK/12  
Photek reworks a dancehall scorcher by Tubby T based on the Spanish Fly riddim. A half-time intro keeps the vocal chorus intact, giving this tune the feel of a song, not just a club track. The first breakdown is devastating, with Tubby dedicating the track to all the girls and shouting "blaze it up" over a heavy snare roll. A rude boy calls out "buu buu buu" as the bass switches to a heavy Reece rinseout. *qReal*

**D BRIDGE CHINA BLUE** Liquid V/UK/12  
**D BRIDGE FEAT. CONCORD DAWN & FIERCE LABYRINTH** Exit VS/UK/12  
Stepping up his profile, D Bridge marks his debut on Bryan G's Liquid V label. "China Blue" is a deep roller with sultry vocals and melodic flourishes bubbling over a warm b-line. "True to the Craft" goes deeper while smooth male vocals glide across the surface. A true craftsman, D Bridge presents a pair of killer collabs on his own Exit label. "Labyrinth" is a collaboration with Kiljoy of Concord Dawn. Warm strings and

a forceful bassline make an awesome combo of the individual styles. DJ Fierce appears on "Daylight," a contrast of both artists' menacing styles, very moody with warm subtle bass. *qReal*

**BAITERCELL & SCHUMACHER VS. AQUASKY WHAT'S DOWN LOW** Black Noise/UK/12  
Aquasky's Black Noise imprint is dedicated to the flashing-strobe-and-dilated-pupils side of the scene, but their production talents keep the tunes a step above. "What's Down Low" pounds the floor with pressure-cooked Amens, robot noises, and vocals that have been Ginsu-sliced; "Red Out" is a high-energy stepper with a silly sample, but plenty of glowstick power. *Star Eyes*

**MASON, TRUST & DSTAR THE PHILLY EP** Gasm/US/12  
From the darkside of Philly cometh this EP of haunted house drum & bass. Dstar and Mason turn out somewhat forgettable darkside rides for Pantera fans, but "Standstill" (by all three under the name Swarm) is a scissor-kicking synth workout with pretty vocals. "Philly" is the anthem, a vintage Metalheadz style slammer with Mentasm bass, crispy snare rides and plenty of roughneck hip-hop flavor. Tuff! *Star Eyes*



The masked man behind Madvillain, Viktor Vaughn & King Geedorah returns with the highly anticipated follow up to *Operation: Doomsday*

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HIP-HOP GUEST  
REVIEWS:  
ROC RAIDA



It could be said that Roc Raida is the essence of turntablism. He started DJing at the age of 10, and eventually won the title of 1995 DMC World Champion with a combination of immense crowd control, insane body maneuvers, and, of course, on-point cutting and scratching skills. Raida is best known as one-third of DJ/production powerhouses The X-Ecutioners (with Total Eclipse and Rob Swift), but his solo career doesn't slouch. He's just released a new CD/DVD on Fatbeats, *The Adventures Of Grand Master Roc Raida*, and he's currently working on his own album, which will feature tons of guest MCs over his hot beats. He's also shopping around a TV show with Lord Sear called *WHATFFM*, writing his autobiography and hazing new X-ecutioners member Boogie Blind and DJ Precision. To top that off, he was recently bestowed the "Grand Master" title by Kool Herc, Grand Wizard Theodore and DST. Here, this hall of famer gives us the lowdown on the hot hip-hop cuts. *Vivian Hoel*  
[www.x-ecutioners.net](http://www.x-ecutioners.net)

SAUKRATES HOPE M3 Entertainment/US/12

I don't know Saukrates personally, but I am definitely a fan of his work. I probably have every record he's put out in the last few years and every time I get a new one it's always great. Lyrics, production, everything—this 12" is strong. *RR*

ONE BE LO DECEPTICONS (PETE ROCK RMX) Fatbeats/US/12

This is a dope 12." Pete Rock is someone I aspire to be like and he comes through here. A classic beat with the horns and everything gives One Be Lo's lyrics a real strong feel. If you haven't heard of this former Binary Star frontman, don't sleep—this kid is a real amazing emcee. *RR*

MR. CHEEKS TURN IT UP Contango/US/12

The man behind classics like "Renee" and "Jeeps, Lex Coups, Bimas and Benz" teams up with the man behind "T.R.O.Y." and "Tru Master" for an unbeatable piece of wax. You can't go wrong with the DJs when both sides of your 12" are produced by Pete Rock. *RR*

PRINCE PO FEAT. RAEKWON  
BUMP BUMP  
Lex/UK/12

After announcing his comeback with *The Slickness*, Prince Po is looking to take back the dancefloor. And when you have a single produced by Madlib and featuring guest MC Raekwon, it better be good. "Bump Bump" exceeds all expectations and, with one of the producer's more jiggy beats and the two MCs on point, it's sure to make the club "blow like tropical weed." *Nick Follett*

MF GRIMM  
GINGERBREAD MAN  
Day By Day-F5/US/12

As a teaser for his upcoming album *American Hunger*, New York rhyme vet MF Grimm returns with two new joints. "Gingerbread Man" plays like a throwback to his Grimm Reaper days, with bloodthirsty verses sprayed over DJ Crucial's chunky drums and chopped guitars. The flipside, "My Love," is a mellower affair, with triumphant lyrics set to MF Doom's ridiculously smooth piano-laced beat. *Brolin Winning*

EARATIK STATIK  
EVIL IS TIMELESS  
Gravel/US/12

Chicago's Earatik Statik has been grinding for a while, dropping singles and rocking shows throughout the Midwest. Here they deliver a three-song single, headed by "Evil Is Timeless," which sports a spooky plucked string loop

and big drums. "ILLstate MASSive" is a cool collabo with Edo G, while PaceWon shows up for the Diamond-produced "People Like US." Serviceable but unremarkable. *Brolin Winning*

SOUND PROVIDERS  
THE BLESSIN'  
ABB/US/12

Sound Providers deliver their usual warm jazzy sound on "The Blessin'," but Blest's urgent vocal delivery and the sharp snares, combined with Soulo's deft scratching, give the song a harder edge than the laid-back vibe they've earned a reputation for. The B-side, "Who Said What," is a tale of life's stresses over a nice funky guitar loop and more nice phrase scratching from Soulo, this time cutting up lines from EPMD, KRS-One, De La Soul, Sadat X, Q-Tip and more. *Ross Hagg*

DOUJAH RAZE NEW YORK CITY  
Trilogy/US/12

Doujah Raze is back with the uptempo and danceable "New York City," an ode to his current home produced by Germany's Shuko; scratches courtesy of the incomparably funky Mista Sinista complement Raze's effortless flow. The MC pays homage to his home state on "Virginia" and is joined by Thad Reid and Born Unique. The production and scratching duties are handled by Disko Dave, who laces Raze with a mellow, introspective track—perfect for a little nostalgic reminiscing. *Ross Hagg*

LEFTFIELD GUEST  
REVIEWS:  
DJ FLACK & DJ C



DJ Flack (Antony Flackett) and DJ C (Jake Trussell) are out to give conservative Boston a kick in the ass. As Duotone, the two create bombastic beat collages with turntables, pedals, laptops, microphones and video projectors. They also run the Beat Research night at the Enormous Room in nearby Cambridge, where they play all manner of experimental dance beats, from bhangra to brock-out drum & bass; the pair is currently starting a label of the same name. In the meantime, DJ C heads up the Mashit imprint, which transmits hard-hitting ragga jungle throughout the land. C's also got a cone-toasting number with Gregory Isaacs coming out on Tigerbeat 6 subsidiary Shockout. And when they get bored (hard to imagine, isn't it?), the pair performs as acapella beat-box-and-rap outfit Beatboxy & Flack. Here's what they're playing now. *Star Eyes*  
[www.beatresearch.com](http://www.beatresearch.com), [www.mashit.com](http://www.mashit.com), [www.djflack.com](http://www.djflack.com)

PANJABI HIT SQUAD DESI BEATS AV8/US/12

You may have noticed Indian music seeping into hip-hop and dancehall recently. On this rockin' bhangra record, familiar riffs by Timbaland ("Ugly"), Neptunes ("Pass The Courvoisier") and Dr. Dre ("No More Drama") are skillfully reworked with traditional Indian vocals and instruments for maximized booty shakin' from Boston to Bombay. *DJ Flack & DJ C*

VIRTUOSO FAHRENHEIT 9/11 Raptivism/US/12

As a proud Massachusetts liberal, it's great to hear local talent tear into Bush and his war with such well-placed anger. The instrumentals can stand on their own too, which is a must for me. "Fahrenheit 9/11," featuring Slain, is melancholy and haunting; "Military Intelligence" with Akrobatic is dark and menacing—a perfect fit for this post-election mood. *DJ Flack*

KRINJAH FUGEES HAND GRENADE Hand Grenade/CAN/12

Krinjah is little known outside the inner circles of the ragga jungle resurgence, but for some he's a hero. The A-side is a rinsing update of "Squeeze," the jungle classic by DJ Ash & DJ Vern, while side B rides Lauren Hill's "Killing Me Softly" into an onslaught of jungle madness. *DJ C*

WATCHERS DUNES PHASE  
Gern Blandsten/US/CD

Watchers had better get ready for a barrage of Talking Heads comparisons... not that that's necessarily a bad thing. Besides the obvious (singer Michael Makeout sounds much like David Byrne), they share with the Heads a love of all things groove, and a complete disregard for genrefication. Be it via latin percussion, post-punk screech or dub-by-vay-of-the-Bronx basslines, Watchers' second outing achieves its intended result: It'll make you *dance*. *Alex Posell*

DENNIS YOUNG/LIQUID LIQUID  
SIGNAL UP AHEAD/FLEXTONE  
Rush Hour/NETH/12

Liquid Liquid's "Flexitone" is a rarity to say the least, one of the seminal New York no-wave band's later efforts which was sorely excluded from the Mo' Wax retrospective released in the late '90s. Glasgow's DJ Twitch opts for a straightforward edit of the original, while Brennan Green rocks one of his finest remix efforts to date. Don't front, just get it. *Roy Dank*

THE POISON ARROWS  
POISON ARROWS EP  
File 13/US/CD

A certain Vangelis-like quality permeates this EP, where slow technological drum patterning and distant vocals provide a nice counterpoint to haunting strings and engine-room ambience. "Trailer Park" and "We Take" demon-

strate a pleasant song-oriented aesthetic, while "Bad Data Trip" and the Martin Rev remix of "Trailer" provide more of an experimental focus. As "leftfield" as any recent outing, yet satisfyingly listenable throughout. *Alex Posell*

JAH DIVISION  
DUB WILL TEAR US APART  
The Social Registry/US/12

Yep. That's right. Dub covers of Joy Division. Come on, just admit it, you know you wish you'd thought of it first. Too bad these Brooklyn kids beat you to it. Ian Curtis is cracking a smile somewhere in heaven. *Alexis Georgopoulos*

MIDNIGHT MIKE  
BRING ME TO MY SENSES  
Gomma-Flesh/GER/12

Back from a brief hiatus, Flesh Audio has resurfaced in what looks like a partnership with German punk/funk/crunk label Gomma, bringing you a record as dark and nasty as their predecessors. Phevv! On the original, David Byrne-esque vocals ride over warped keys, fuzzy distorted bass, crispy hats and a straight, jackin' 4/4, but if you like yours a little looser and chopped up, it's the Zongamin remix that will get you movin'. Not exactly music for your granny, but wicked none the less. *TK Disko*

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MUSIC FROM THE LIMITED EDITION "FAST CARS, DANGER, FIRE & KNIVES" EP PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES "THE LIVING HUMAN CURIOSITY SIDESHOW", A PERFECT-BOUND 88-PAGE BOOK OF LYRICS SPANNING AESOP ROCK'S CAREER ALONG WITH NEW ARTWORK AND PHOTOS COMMITTING HIS STUNNING USE OF LANGUAGE TO PAPER FOR THE FIRST TIME.

**BLACK  
DIALOGUE**  
**THE PERCEPTIONIST'S**  
AKROBATIK MR. LIF DJ FAKTS ONE  
DEBUT ALBUM FROM BOSTON SUPER GROUP MADE UP OF  
AKROBATIK, MR. LIF AND DJ FAKTS ONE.  
ALBUM FEATURES GUEST APPEARANCES FROM GURU, SHOCK G.,  
PHONTE OF LITTLE BROTHER • PRODUCTION BY EL-P AND OTHERS.



FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS:  
RAINER TRÜBY

Legend has it that Peter Kruder (of Kruder & Dorfmeister) was so taken with Rainer Trüby’s Root Down club night in Freiburg, Germany that he had to write a tune in tribute. A definite testament to the DJ skills of this deck technician, who’s known for combining broken beat, future jazz, Brazilian, house and even drum & bass into his lush sets. But Trüby is no mere DJ and tastemaker, despite having compiled the wildly popular *Glücklich* series for Compost Records. He also fronts production collective Trüby Trio (with Fauna Flash-ers Christian Prommer and Roland Appell), whose 2003 album *Elevator Music* was a prime slice of organic downtempo. On February 8, Trüby Trio will release *Retreated*, a compilation of in-demand remixes of their tracks by the likes of Yam Who, Lil’ Louie Vega, Tiefschwarz and Señor Coconut. We took a break from typing out umlauts to ask Mr. Trüby about the crucial future jazz jams. *Leif Schwartz*  
www.compost-records.com

TRICKSKI SWEAT Sonarkollektiv/GER/12

These two young cats, Yannick Labbe and Daniel “Stoerte” Becker, hail from the Freiburg region in Southwest Germany and moved to Berlin to join forces with Jazzanova’s Sonarkollektiv. The outcome is a techy but nevertheless very soulful affair featuring Samoan-born MC Cocotrunk, who apparently is New Zealand’s answer to Puff Daddy. Shirts off, this tune could well make you sweat...*RT*

REEL PEOPLE FEAT. SHARLENE HECTOR THE RAIN Papa/UK/12

Oh my god, Reel People delivers again! All their previous releases have been prime examples of soulful dance music, but this one possibly tops it all. “The Rain” has a slightly broken, but still very accessible, beat and it just oozes soul and musicality. Sounded very good at the UK’s Southport Weekender! *RT*

A BOSSA ELETRICA SKINDO LE-LE Raw Fusion/SWE/12

The excellent Stockholm-based Raw Fusion brings you this dancefloor gem by live band A Bossa Eletrica. “Skindo Le-Le” is still a London jazz dance classic heavily played by the likes of Gilles Peterson and Patrick Forge. On the flip, A Bossa Eletrica gets a Swedish remix treatment by S.U.M.O., who definitely know how to bounce without losing the melodic spirit of the original. *RT*

LEO TARDIN’S GRANDPIANORAMAX  
STARLITE  
Obliqsound/US/12

Leo Tardin—a Swiss-born jazz pianist who’s collaborated with the likes of Charles Tolliver and Frank Morgan—and live drummer Jojo Mayer craft modern jazz with elegant touches; perfect territory for remixers Nuspirit Helsinki and Domu to add their futuristic flourishes. With Helsinki’s added brass over a shuffling house beat, and Domu’s simmering, spacey synths and compressed drum work, “Starlite” is a single blessed by some of the best electronic minds in the business. *Tomas*

BLUEPRINT RUBY  
Exceptional/UK/12

As soul-jazz evolved from its ’70s origins with artists like Lonnie Liston Smith and Roy Ayers to ’80s quiet storm and ’90s acid jazz forms, it further incorporated a wealth of melodic chords and ambient synth pads. The aftershocks are felt today in projects like Blueprint, whose “Ruby” has a warm sheen similar to Coldcut’s Balearic classic “Autumn Leaves,” mixed with producer Jimpster’s snug beats. Blueprint plays all their instruments live and the Gerd remix here is as club-friendly as it gets. *Derek Gray*

AFRONAUT GOLPE DURO CALINDA  
Bitasweet/UK/12

Orin “Afronaut” Walters delivers an infectious modern Afro-Latin/broken beat hybrid. From a live recording session in Puerto Rico amongst native musicians, percussive elements and uplifting chants fronted by Son del Batey, Orin and collaborator Daz-I-Kue have crafted a classic dancefloor bomb. The dead are dancing, the gods are crazy and the musical wrecking crew here will inflict damage. *Velanche*



SHARON JONES AND THE DAP KINGS  
WHAT IF WE STOPPED PAYING TAXES  
LEE FIELDS AND SUGARMAN AND CO.  
YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN  
Daptone/US/7

It is clear, by now, that those in charge at Daptone Records know how they want their records to sound, a point that’s further cemented with their two most recent 7”s. Sharon Jones offers a pair of protest songs (including “This Land is Your Land”) delivered with her usual urgency. Lee Fields, sounding more like Wilson Pickett here than the usual James Brown rap, delivers one song for the dancefloor (with Neil Sugarman’s groovy backing) and one for loves lost. *Nick Follett*

TAKE COLOSSAL VOL. 2  
Buttermilk/US/CD

First they had the Space Needle. Now Seattle can add Take to its cosmic collection. They also have cold weather, which might explain the hibernation-friendly tempos and warm downtempo dreamscapes. Fortunately, Take tracks are sprinkled with just enough glitch-n-grit to keep ears bent. As a bonus there are remixes galore, including the cinematic vocoded Caural version and one by the ever-sporadic Daedelus. *Franz Carr*

DALINDEO POSEIDON  
Ricky-Tick/FIN/12

Following on the success of the straight-ahead live jazz of their Five Corners Quintet releases, Finland’s Ricky-Tick showcases Dalindeo, a year-old sextet that focuses on a breezy, Brazilian jazz-influenced sound. Dalindeo’s flute, sax and trumpet solos embody the cool sparseness of classic West Coast jazz artists Art Pepper or Stan Getz, and are arranged in the style of classic Gerald Wilson or Wes Montgomery songs. A classy release for your hi-fi. *Derek Gray*

DELGUI BOOGIE BRIDGE  
4Lux/NETH/12

Along with musical partner Pablo Delgado, Gerd has earned massive respect for some of the most soulful and bumpy remixes around. As “Boogie Bridge” finds vocalist Marilyn David in badass chant mode, Gerd’s signature edgy nu-funk ensures warmth here. With a more house-influenced mix rounding the disc out, Delgui is about to draw the groove line in the sand. *Velanche*

PERRY HEMUS CHANGES IN 3/4  
BRYAN CORBETT CORBENOVA  
Woodland/UK/12

Perry Hemus has been carving out a niche for himself ever since the release of “Rhodesmode” on his own UK-based Woodland label. “Changes” features Lizzy Parks crooning over Brazilian-laced goodness, with a nice mix from Sasso and a thumping mix from Gerd inna 6/8 tempo. Trumpeter Bryan Corbett’s “Corbenova” is freshness sans heavy beats, with enough jazz layers to please both purist and nu-jazz lovers alike. Some of the year’s best jazz can be heard on this excellent EP. *Velanche*

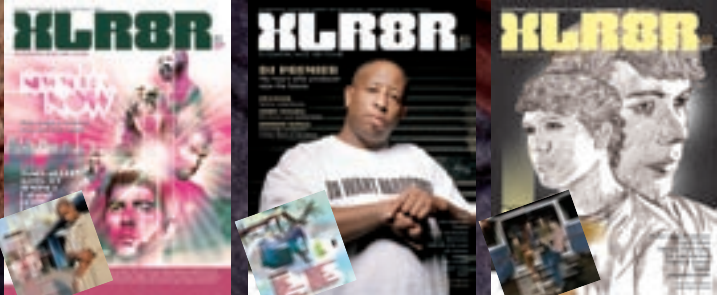
LINKWOOD FAMILY MILES AWAY  
Firecracker/SC07/12

An old proverb states: “Make first record on your new label a good one, or all future releases will automatically end up in the trade pile.” Fortunately these Scottish fellas knew this, turning out a quality EP including vocals by Joseph Malik, tasty soulful house, dirty-edit disco and a Sun Ra-flavored thang. Reminds me of another proverb: If it’s not Scottish, it’s crap. *Franz Carr*

PHOTO Shawn Brackbill  
LOCATION Philly International Studios



“Most magazines report music past and present. *XLR8R* reports the future of music. It should be the blueprint for all magazines, period.”  
-King Britt, Fivesixrecordings



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**XLR8R** incite





LUCKY 13  
BY TOPH ONE



need no introduction, but this new collection brings together some classic collabos (Rasco, Dilated Peoples, Grand Agent) along with some rare remixes (Beastie Boys, Blackalicious, Mos Def & Diverse, Kool Keith) and ties it all up in one funky little redneck package.

**9) TAL M. KLEIN ALPHA-BEATS (Anihilgital/US/CD)** Dusky, funky downtempo beats from one to watch. I reviewed his *Peace, Love, Beats* LP as a white label back in '02, and now Tal's back with a 26-track, fully realized opus full of vocals, guest musicians and a big, fat sound. Grand Central? Om Records? Pick this free agent up!

**10) PEDESTRIAN VOLUME ONE: UNINDIAN SONGS (Anticon/US/2xLP)** Thank fuck for weirdos like Pedestrian. Parts of this album sound like a Tom Waits traveling medicine show or a Southern prayer meeting, and then there are straight bangers like “O Hosanna,” “O Silent Bed,” and “Arrest the President.” It takes balls to fly your freak flag that high, it really does.

**11) DOUJAH RAZE "NEW YORK CITY"** (Trilogy/US/12) A lively A-side ode to NYC, but I'll take the lazier vibe of "Virginia" on the flip, with its loping beat, cuts and guitar twangs that fit the vocals like a glove.

**12) THAT HANDSOME DEVIL "DATING TIPS"** (Art&Craft/US/12) And thank the Lord that someone's finally rocking the big band Sinatra swagger tip again. Look forward to hearing more from this new Traffic label offshoot.

**LUCKY 13) DJ MILES FUNKY SOLE (Root Down/US/CD)** That Kid Named Miles just has soul in his blood—founding member of LA's BreaKstra, producer for T-Love, Medusa and others, and the man behind the decks at some of Hollywood's funkiest nights. Check him here doing his thing. Yowza!

### Kutmasta Kurt's Redneck Games

*TophOne can be heard every Wednesday night at the Red Wine Social at Dalva in SF. [redwine@xlr8r.com](mailto:redwine@xlr8r.com)*



## THE BLAST ZONE: BY DJ ENKI

Snap of the Month award goes to Joe Quixx for this observation: "It sounds like he's DJing a funeral." Rapper dapper schnapper!

Nothing says "Bay Area" like a 40-something business dude in an expensive suit strolling down an Oakland sidewalk at 3:00 in the afternoon smoking a gigantic spliff.

Foods that officially do not translate outside of the cities they take their names from: New York pizza, New York deli sandwiches, San Francisco sourdough, New Orleans gumbo, Chicago deep-dish pizza, Philly cheesesteaks.

To continue the “things done changed” theme I seem to have going from column to column, as a club DJ, I feel like gangsta rap has taken a severe downturn. Nowadays, it’s really slow and listless, like wake ‘n’ baking to counteract your Olde English hangover. It used to be ferocious—fast, angry, relentless and with the energy of a Mack truck at top speed. Which is to say, gangsta rap used to translate very well to club use. With that in mind here are the **Top Five Gangsta Rap Club Bangers**:

**1. AMG “Bitch Betta Have My Money” (Select)** Can be kinda dicey—the women in the crowd have to be able to overlook the lyrical content—but the beat fills a club with a raucous energy that can’t be contained. Word to the muthafuckin’ DJ Quik.

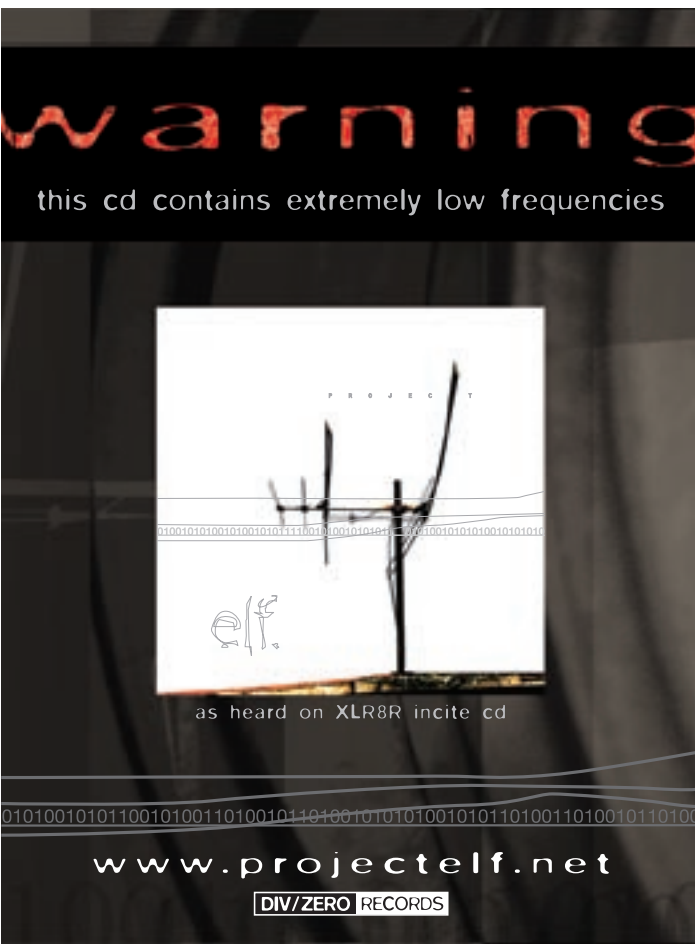
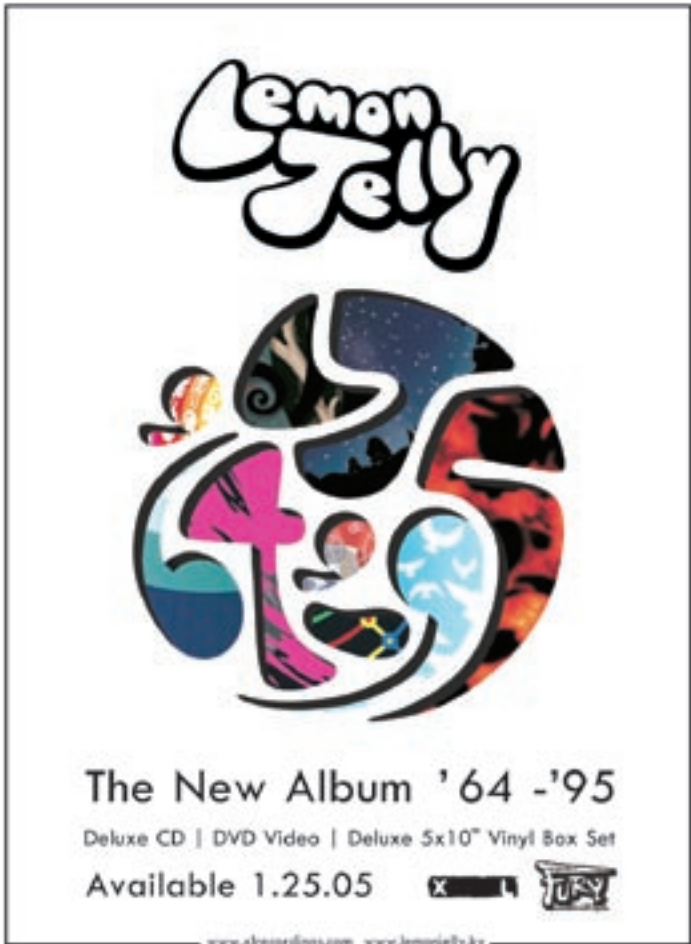
**2. Volume 10 “Pistol Grip Pump” (RCA)** The Good Life Café wasn’t all about jazz-scat rhyming. Volume 10’s G-ed up ode to his favorite firearm is like a blueprint for how to make trite subject matter sound fresh.

**3. NWA "Straight Outta Compton" (Ruthless)** Not the first gangsta song but quite possibly the finest. The beat hits with the impact of a runaway train, and it would completely overpower any attempts at rhyming if it weren't being laced by the young and hungry versions of Ice Cube and MC Ren.

#### 4. Ice Cube "The Nigga You Love To Hate" (Profile)

"Steady Mobbin'" is the sentimental favorite—and the one that still gets the most club play—but it's more of a laid-back groove than an angry, arched-eyebrows Cube track. But Cube's first solo track lashes out and never stops.

**5. The D.O.C. "Whirlwind Pyramid" (Ruthless)** I guess there's some debate as to whether the diggy-diggy Doc was a gangsta rapper, but he's gangsta enough by association for this list. Anyway, more of that scorching Ruthless-era Dre, and nobody—not Snoop, not Cube, not Eminem, nobody—sounds better over Dre tracks than the D.O.C.





IN THE STUDIO PHOTEK

Air conditioning and strong tea are more important than fancy gear to this drum & bass icon.

Primary '90s UK drum & bass architect Rupert Parkes, a.k.a. Photek, has moved to Los Angeles, where he creates movie soundtracks and pushes the boundaries of gear. We checked out what makes his studio tick.

What is your favorite tool in the studio—the one you find you can’t stop using?

Earl Grey tea and cigarettes. I’m not kidding! I cannot function in the studio without these two. Logic Audio (Mac) is still my centerpiece. The E-mu samplers (the E4 and E64) were my signature sound for years. I had stopped using them for a long time but I noticed the difference in my sound, so I dusted them off and plugged them in again recently. The software sampler Kontakt [Native Instruments] has been one of my more recent weapons of choice, mainly due to the detailed control it gives you over individual sounds. I’ve been getting to grips with Photone for sound creation, then bouncing the results over to play back using Kontakt. My most recent purchase has been Blue Sky System One monitors. Since I’ve been using them, everything else seems a bit weak.

Do you get more pleasure working the stage or studio?

For years, I have always been 99 percent studio and one percent DJ. The studio is still my priority; it’s the truly creative part and I never really wanted to be a performer. Having said that, it has changed in the last couple of years. I make much more of performance than I used to. I had this realization that it’s not enough to get up on stage and simply mix records—it’s also about interacting with the crowd and giving as much energy as you can to them. I really enjoy shows a lot more and I think by giving more I’m getting more back.

What is your favorite luxury in the studio?

Air conditioning! It’s unbearable in LA without it. Especially when all the studio gear is fired up, it gets like an oven without AC. At home, I would have to say the jacuzzi. It’s a big outdoor one. Every time I’m in there it reminds me of what I don’t miss about London.

What is your instrumental background?

My first venture into music was playing tenor sax. I actually used the sax again on a track recently (“Age of Empires” on Metalheadz). I was amazed I could still play! I guess it’s like riding a bike, right? Actually, I just put together my dream BMX from when I was a kid and I’ve definitely lost my skills for that! It’s a flatland bike based on a Quamen frame—awesome.

Do you ever feel trapped in your genre? How do you deal with that?

I have felt trapped in the past for sure. I don’t have that problem so much these days. I’ve dropped all that baggage where you feel you have to do one thing, and being worried about what other people might say. I guess I’m confident in my commitment to d&b, so I don’t feel like it’s an issue of betrayal when I want to do something outside the genre. I understand where the hardcore jungle-nazi attitude comes from. I mean, I was definitely one of those when I was younger. And before that I was the same about hip-hop. I always dismissed other genres because I felt my genre needed defending in the early days. People would say stuff

like ‘Hip-hop? That’s not even proper music! Some angry geezer shouting over a beat! They don’t even play their own instruments!’ So I would always respond in kind. As a hardcore head, you will always be against anything that might affect the purity of, or compete with, your chosen genre. But we invented d&b by mixing genres together in the beginning, so I think that says it all.

What do you absolutely hate about music?

Mediocre efforts and insincerity. People blowing up music that just isn’t that great (especially when they know it!). The devaluation of music in recent culture. Music has been so abused recently that it’s become less relevant to people. [I hate] when people release records that they wouldn’t even buy themselves!

How do you get out of a musical rut?

One thing I’ve learned: Writer’s block is a luxury I cannot afford. It’s easy to deal with. I usually switch into business mode for a while. (See how quick you come up with music ideas when you look at the alternatives!) Or I get out of the studio for a bit. I’ll usually just get ideas from things I see and hear when I’m out and about. If all else fails, play Xbox.

“Baltimore” is out now on Photek Records. www.photekproductions.com



In Photek’s studio (top to bottom), Kontakt screenshot, E-mu E64, Blue Sky System One monitors, E-mu E4



Words: Jesse Terry  
Photo: Monaco D



2005 WINTER NAMM PREVIEW

XLR8R checks out the toys that will make you empty your wallet and turn you into a musical hermit.



**Numark AVM01 Audio/Video Mixer**  
Throw down your arms, video and disc jockeys, this is the one mixer that lets you do everything from one console.  
[www.numark.com](http://www.numark.com)



**Vestax QFO Turntable**  
We all knew Q-bert was on another planet with his scratching abilities, but this futuristic turntable/mixer/flying saucer he helped design is some crazy shit.  
[www.vestax.com](http://www.vestax.com)



**Tascam Firewire 1082**  
In addition to a flying-fader mixer, this new unit also delivers 10 audio inputs and a dope software bundle to transform your computer from an Internet porn hub to a hi-fi recording studio.  
[www.tascam.com](http://www.tascam.com)

**Gemini DSP-1, Stanton DJFX, Pioneer DJ Effector**  
Don't let guitarists have all the fun; add flange, chorus, reverb, filtering and a whole lot more effects to your DJ sets.  
[www.stantondj.com](http://www.stantondj.com), [www.geminidj.com](http://www.geminidj.com), [www.pioneerprodj.com](http://www.pioneerprodj.com)



**ESI Neon**  
ESI's mini USB Audio/MIDI keyboard and its older sister the Aon allow you to record up to four tracks of audio in addition to controlling your software studios.  
[www.esi-pro.com](http://www.esi-pro.com)



**AKG Merlin 232 Headphones**  
Remember when that shredder in your high school got a wireless unit for his guitar? Dude's younger brother is a DJ and he's set for a wireless jam alone in his room, too.  
[www.akg.com](http://www.akg.com)



**Gem Sound CD60**  
This rack-mounted double-deck CD DJ model comes with all the bells and whistles (anti-shock, looping, cueing, digital outs) for a fraction of what you think it would cost.  
[www.gemsound.com](http://www.gemsound.com)



**Gemini ICDJ**  
An inexpensive entry in the CD DJ market with anti-shock buffers, pitch-bend and a look that HAL 9000 would approve of.  
[www.geminidj.com](http://www.geminidj.com)



**Alesis Photon 25**  
This handy little USB MIDI keyboard controller incorporates Alesis' Air Synth technology, allowing you to control effects with a wave of your hand.  
[www.alesis.com](http://www.alesis.com)

**Stanton Final Scratch 2.0/Traktor 2.6**  
Stanton and Native Instruments update their groundbreaking hardware/software combination package, which allows you to scratch and mix your MP3 collection using your turntables.  
[www.stantondj.com](http://www.stantondj.com), [www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com)







YOU CAN LISTEN INDOORS AND LOOK LIKE CLARK GRISWOLD AT THE SAME TIME.

OAKLEY THUMP SUNGLASSES

Oakley has created a pair of sunglasses that James Bond would love. With their new Thump model, you can store 256 MB of MP3s on your sunglasses, and, we kid you not, listen to them with the flip down earpods attached to the frame. The lenses flip up, so you can listen indoors and look like Clark Griswold at the same time. My only beef with Oakley’s sunglasses is their style; they look like the love child of Chicago Bear Jim McMahon’s cheesy specs and tapered-leg, zebra-striped Zubaz muscle pants. At least you can rock the “Superbowl Shuffle” while sport-ing them. *Jeossie Terry*  
**Oakley Thump MSRP: \$495; [www.oakley.com](http://www.oakley.com)**



THEY KIND OF LOOK LIKE THE HANDS OF AN OMNIBOT.

STANTON DJ PRO 3000

Stanton raises the bar again, delivering Stanton DJ Pro 3000 Headphones with all the usual features and a few new bells and whistles to whet your appetite for deconstruction. Stanton does a great job on the basics: closed cup design and swiveling ears that fold and adjust to your preferences. The headphones also come with high- and low-pass filters, useful in a situation where you can’t hear a particular frequency well enough, but don’t want to blast your eardrums with too much bass or treble. The cable is detachable for storage and replacement. Most importantly, the headphones have cool little blue lights, and they kind of look like the hands of an Omnitbot. *Jeossie Terry*  
**Stanton DJ Pro 3000 Headphones MSRP: \$199; [www.stantondj.com](http://www.stantondj.com)**

QUICKIE: ARCHOS GMINI XS 200 MP3

The Gmini is a new entry into the MP3 player market, utilizing a tiny hard drive allowing for 20 gigabytes of MP3s in a small package. The graphic display uses icons like your computer, helping you navigate all the way from ABBA to Zappa. With a \$249 suggested retail, you’ll save bucks if you forgo the iPod, allowing you to purchase more legal music, right? *Jeossie Terry*  
**Pros:** Low-cost, small size, 10-hour battery life.  
**Cons:** Battery not user replaceable.  
**Archos Gmini XS 200 MP3 MSRP: \$249.95; [www.archos.com](http://www.archos.com)**



APPLIED ACOUSTICS ULTRA ANALOG

If you don’t have the cash to pony up for a used Juno, Moog, Rhodes, Arp or Sequential Circuits, the Ultra Analog is the perfect virtual synthesizer solution. Using “physical modeling,” Applied Acoustics has done a stunning job of recreating the sounds of the past and future. The presets are divided into categories like ambient, arpeggiator, bass, keys and pads, among others. With so many presets available, the average musician won’t even have to delve into programming this beast. Patch names like Woofer Loving Bass, Futurescape and Reggae Chords give you an idea of what to expect: tons and tons of aural goodies in vintage and futuristic sonic styles. For those who prefer to make sounds from scratch, there is a familiar, vintage-looking interface where you can tweak oscillators, filters and envelope shapes, sound designing on the fly. As many of them are synced to the tempo of your song, you can create wild rhythmic ambiance and percussion as well. Looks like the digital age has caught up with the warm analog tones of the past. *Jeossie Terry*  
**Applied Acoustics Ultra Analog MSRP: \$199; [www.applied-aqoustics.com](http://www.applied-aqoustics.com)**

THE AVERAGE MUSICIAN WON’T EVEN HAVE TO DELVE INTO PROGRAMMING THIS BEAST.



M-AUDIO 02

M-Audio’s new 02 25-key mobile USB controller joins Edirol’s PCR-M1 “SLIM” model in the Thinnest Keyboard In The World category. Realizing that airlines are charging us for peanuts, pillows and every damn extra pound we bring on their flying boats, M-Audio gives producers and DJs a few less ounces to lug around. And rest assured, you won’t knock over your cabin mate’s Bloody Mary when you plop this tiny unit down on your lap for an in-flight jam session.

The challenge for designers of small-sized controllers is to pack maximum knobs and buttons onto a thinner face, and make sure that keystrokes have sufficient impact. The 02’s key actions take a few songs’ worth of recording to dial in, but once you’re used to them, you’d think you were playing a baby grand piano.

I tried out the 02 with Propellerheads Reason 2.5 and Ableton Live 4.0, and found a range of usefulness for both live performance and recording. With Live I was able to quickly assign the device’s eight rotary knobs to the software program’s bangin’ effects, swiveling them with mad abandon. But it was a little more complex trying to get the eight function buttons to switch devices on and off. The 02 immediately syncs with Live’s MIDI instruments, so launching a song then playing a wicked instrumental solo was an instantaneous thrill. Now, if only my Rhodes soloing wasn’t so horrible...but I digress.

I didn’t use the 02 with the controller’s bundled software, but the controller has two pre-set modes for Reason that don’t require any MIDI assignments. While making your own key, button and knob assignments on the 02 in Reason takes some patience, the end result is a palette of controls that makes performing a live remix on stage a real possibility.

Don’t stress about the limits of 02’s 25 velocity-sensitive keys; the Octave up/down toggle will quickly bound you up and down your black and white fretboard. There are also pitch-bend and modulation toggles as well as a foot-pedal input and volume slider. Powered via USB (or a 9V DC adapter), weighing a scant three pounds and bundled with Reason Adapted, the 02 is the future of MIDI control that’s ready for your backpack trip to Bali now. *Tomas Palermo*

**M-Audio 02 MSRP: \$179.95; [www.m-audio.com](http://www.m-audio.com)**

THE 02 IS THE FUTURE OF MIDI CONTROL THAT’S READY FOR YOUR BACKPACK TRIP TO BALI NOW.







BATTERY 2 WILL HAVE BEATMAKERS THE WORLD OVER USING THEIR MPCs AS DOORSTOPS.

DOM & ROLAND TAKES ON NATIVE

There is a quality to a sample’s sound—some call it punch, some call it balls. Until now, hardware samplers were the only way to get it. Software alternatives have always been more flexible and visually friendly but overall they sounded flat compared to the hardware they were emulating. With balls to spare, the best user interface I’ve seen and more routing flexibility than an orgy of gymnasts, Battery 2 will have beatmakers the world over using their MPCs as doorstops.

Visually, not much has changed since the first version of Battery. Samples are laid out on a super-sized grid of gray boxes, which can be swapped around and muted or soloed individually or in groups. Producer Dom & Roland agrees:

“The best thing is the layout. Nearly every feature is only one mouse click away, which means my ideas get down quicker.”

Sonically, however, everything has changed in version two. “I love the way the waveform changes shape in real time,” says Dom, “reflecting what you’ve done to it with envelopes, pitch or compression.”

With the newly optimized sample engine at the core of the software, Battery 2 gives each sample its own envelope, filter, compression, LFO/pitch modulation and loop point settings. Want to place a sweepable filter on just your high-hat and have its velocity modulated by an LFO? Battery 2 will have you daydreaming of all the new ways you can process your beats. With over 3 gigabytes of optimized samples (that you’ll actually want to use) included on the DVD-ROM installer, you may as well say goodbye to your sex life, because you’ll be spending all your time making music. As Dom & Roland puts it, “beat designing has never been this good.” *Chachi Jones*

**Native Instruments Battery 2 MSRP: \$229 (\$119 Upgrade); [www.native-instruments.com](http://www.native-instruments.com)**

REASON DRUM KITS REFILL COLLECTION

As a virgin drummer, I did what many other poor college students wanting to start their own band did—I cobbled together borrowed and found skins, added some metal trash cans and pipes to bang on, and *voilà*. Instant drum kit. Gradually, I moved from noise pots to a Ludwig kit, but no matter if you play top of the line maple wood shells or a \$10 pawnshop kit, you can find creative ways to make it sound decent.

Which brings us to Propellerheads’ highly anticipated new instrument patch, Reason Drum Kits ReFill Collection, a gathering of expertly mic’d and produced drum sounds for all types of song building. Let’s be clear, though: You will not find any computer drums here—no Roland, Juno or Casio noises in sight! Rather, you get a thorough package of acoustic snares, toms, cymbals, hand percussion, claps and finger snaps for use in Reason’s ReDrum and NN-Xt Advance Sampler instruments, as well as 20 pre-made drum templates that can be loaded and changed to suit your needs. Excellent preset patches for the Scream overdrive unit and RV7000 advanced reverb effect unit make customizing sounds easy.

These drums are the real deal: Ludwig, Gretsch, DW, Yamaha, Zildjian and Paiste fixtures are mic’d in a variety of settings (close, stereo mix, no ambience, all-mic), providing a range of choices for each of the 17 kit set-ups.

My challenge was to take this ReFill, learn how to use it quickly, and make a blazing song out of just the drum kits. First, I made a basic studio set-up in Reason (mixer, a couple ReDrum machines, one NN-Xt, some effects). Then I loaded a kit into the NN-Xt. These patches take *hella* time to load, but ultimately are worth it, especially if you’re using a keyboard controller (49 keys recommended). Next, I loaded the Scream and RV7000 template settings to effect the drums and started punchin’ buttons and keys to make a lickie riddim.

So how did my all-drum song turn out? Good, especially when I pitched the snare and cymbal sounds way up or down, added compression, changed the meter so the drums had more “swing,” and generally made the drums not sound like they originally came. I’m not saying they sound bad, but many kits’ sounds are similar, so you have really mess about to make them sound like *you*. Which is to say, just like my original garbage can kit, Drum Kits ReFill is best when you forget the rules and just play. *Tomae Palermo*

**Reason Drum Kits ReFill Collection: \$129; [www.propellerheads.se](http://www.propellerheads.se)**

DRUM KITS REFILL IS BEST WHEN YOU FORGET THE RULES AND JUST PLAY.



dodo bird

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do•do (do'do) *n., pl. 1.* A large flightless bird, *Raphus cucullatus*, of the island Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, that has been extinct since the late 17th century.

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Finland's finest export combines organic touches and viscous shapes into new world psychedelia.

Kustaa Saksi's illustrations are a syrupy disarray of elements: playful, paradoxical, often over-glossy, inviting, troubling, messy, and yet strangely clear. It's no small feat to articulate such a message in the hit-and-badly-miss world of graphic design, especially when so many adjectives are involved, but the 29-year-old Finn pulls it off with aplomb.

Saksi describes his illustrations as "colorful, funny shapes," but they're a little more complicated than that. Funny shapes and vivid colors can be found everywhere in nature, but finding order in it all is the artful part. Saksi's designs radiate meaning, bending what's real and distilling what's unreal. It's the essence of graphic design—symbolic purpose—that so many Adobe illustrators hope to achieve.

Finland's Lahti Institute of Design helped discipline Saksi's kaleidoscopic vision, eventually leading to a job running Mongrel Associates—a Helsinki-based collective of designers, illustrators and fashionistas. While there, Saksi forged t-shirt designs for Comme des Garçons, designed album jackets for Dallas Superstars and oversaw industrial designs from furniture to ashtrays. The magazine industry has benefited, too. *Playboy*, *Sleazenation*, *Wallpaper*, and LA art 'zine *Arkitip* have all been beautified by Saksi's touch.

Now a full-time freelance illustrator, Saksi is searching out new challenges, from broadening his work in music videos to developing advertising campaigns. (He's already done work for Citroën and Diesel). Off to a fresh start, Saksi made the recent move from his homeland to Paris, a city he describes as "disappointing." We're sure he'll find a way to fix that problem. After all, practical beauty exists everywhere, even in Paris.

[www.kustaaasaksi.com](http://www.kustaaasaksi.com)

What is your earliest memory of being artistic?

I went to a kids' art school when I was six. The teachers went mad because I just wanted to draw racecars with fat tires from the beautiful front angle. I woodcarved, painted and silk-screened race cars from the same angle.

When did you know that you wanted to become a career illustrator?

I never really thought about it. I've been drawing and making images all my life. After high school I went into the Finnish Navy to be a seaman. I've always loved the sea. After that I wanted to go to art school and managed to graduate after four years of studies. Since then I've done a lot of different projects—both artistic and commercial. I see myself more like a craftsman.

Do you feel there is a difference between an artist and an illustrator?

There shouldn't be any difference. I think being an artist is more about the attitude. It's quite difficult to make art if you're working at an office, though.

Many DJs came from obscurity and achieved superstar status. Now, it seems the graphic designer is repeating the pattern.

Do you think so? I never really understood the DJ hype thing, though. How can people behind the turntables suddenly become cool? Many DJs went on to produce their own stuff too, but usually it was sample-based—a bit like this universal graphic design scene is nowadays, with bits and pieces from here and there. But people with their own ideas will always be admired, I guess.

Do you think graphic designers are worthy of the praise? Some argue that Photoshop and Illustrator make the job too easy.

We are living in a digital world. I don't think it matters anymore how people produce their images. All that matters is the image itself—no matter how it's

Words: Carleton Curtis  
Images: Kustaa Saksi; at right,  
an exclusive work for XLR8R







done. But nowadays, unfortunately, many graphic designers are slaves to the software they are using. For me, the computer is just a tool like pen and ink. It's always equally challenging to start with an empty piece of paper or a computer screen.

Finland has been derided as the cultural armpit of Scandinavia. Is that true? Does environment play a major role in the creative process?

No, that's not true. Finland is the best of Scandinavia, really! It's the most original place of the Nordic countries. We have a strong heritage in innovative art, design and architecture...and the world's highest suicide rate, because of the dark and cold winter. Since the 1930s, Finnish design has followed two guiding principles: practicality and beauty.

What kind of creative inspirations do you find that are unique to Finland?

I think Finnish nature has always been the most creative inspiration for all artists from Finland. It surrounds you everywhere you go. As a Finn, you realize it after you have moved out from there. In Paris, I can't get that feeling. There's no magic. Of course, there are other good things about Paris.

So why do you think so many American writers, thespians and other creative types migrate to Paris?

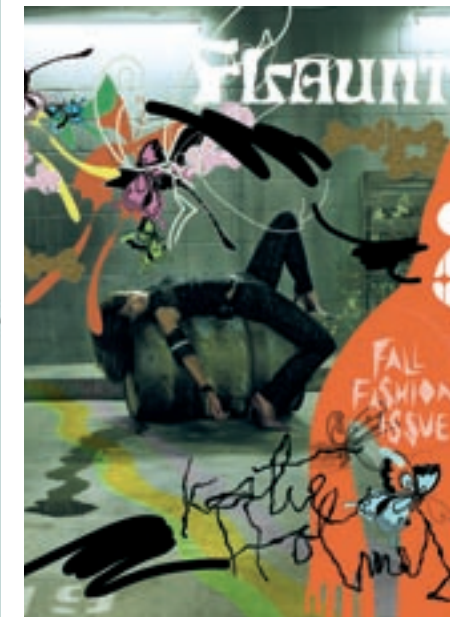
I think Paris still manages to have this romantic reputation of freedom and creativity, I mean, especially from Americans' point of view. In reality, it's a big disappointment. Usually Paris is old-fashioned, bureaucratic and cold. But you can still live the dream here. I think Paris is more like a place in your mind.

Are there any American graphic designers or illustrators whom you admire?

Sure. I love Milton Glaser and Herb Lubalin's work. Norman Rockwell has always been one of my favorites, and Harrison Fisher. I'm more into old-school American illustration.



Opposite page: work for *Arkitip*, album art for Husky Rescue's *Country Falls*; This page: t-shirt graphic for Upper Playground, *Flaunt*'s fall issue cover, work entitled "Biba"



What do you find more important: the message of graphic design, or the appearance of graphic design? For me the appearance of the graphics is more important. If the image itself is strong or weak or ugly or beautiful enough it will seduce the viewer, for sure. The great thing with images is that you don't have to explain them to anyone. Everyone sees them a bit differently depending on their history and feelings.

It appears that fluidity and psychedelia are the foundation for many of your works. How did you land here?

I think I came to psychedelia through music, and I found fluidity many years ago from the great commercial illustrations on the packaging for chocolate mousse, Jello, and other dripping molds.

What's your all-time favorite advertising mascot?

I think it's Misha, mascot of the 1980 summer Olympics in Moscow. It's difficult not to fall in love with the big-headed, sympathetic, smiling bear figure, especially as a kid. And it's got some attitude and charm hard to find from any characters nowadays.

Let's turn the subject to music. Given the state of music piracy, do you believe album cover art to be as important as it once was?

I hope it will remain. There will always be music lovers who care about the visuals too. And vinyl is coming back strong again with some great album covers. Who else can the kids identify with if there's no sign of a gorgeous lead singer?

What kind of current trends in graphics and illustration repulse you?

The lack of imagination. Badly drawn vector graphics (although in some cases they can be great if they are totally poor).

So what makes one graphic designer better than the next graphic designer?

Nothing really. The worst one can be the best one tomorrow.







## TBC: THE WHOLE TRUTH

A BOOK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM MORPHS INTO A PLAY, AN ART SHOW, A MOVEMENT.

WORDS: TAMARA WARREN PHOTO: EDDIE ADAMS FROM *SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER* ©2004

2004 was a year of politically charged artistic idealism. Bands, artists and fans jumped on the bandwagon pushing politics for social change. Le Tigre, Antibalas, Beastie Boys and Eminem spoke out against government, war and oppression in their music.

But in the post-election fallout of 2005, activism is in danger of slipping behind a cloud of apathy, with the status quo unmarred by organizational efforts. Talk of progress has been stomped upon by the Republican powers that be. Domestically, the education and public health system are in dire straits, and intolerance swells against immigrant and minority communities with homeland security measures and homophobic amendments surging.

For the young, progressive and liberally minded, a retreat into the familiar electronic underground looks enticing, with the pulse of an iPod's bass blocking out reality until 2008 rolls around. It seems that ordinary individuals don't have much of a chance at making a difference in times like these.

If that's how you're feeling, shame on you.

To stave off apathy and pessimism, the paperback release of *Speak Truth To Power* (Umbrage Press; \$34.95, softcover) should quell feelings of pity and remind people that times of struggle transform everyday folks into heroes.

From East Timor to South Africa to the United States, author Kerry Kennedy and the late Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Eddie Adams joined forces to compile a collection of

Oscar Arias Sánchez and the cover of *Speak Truth to Power*



remarkable personal stories of struggle. First published in 2000, the book is a visual and written testament to the fortitude of the human spirit under the bleakest circumstances, detailing the stories of 51 human rights activists and their individual plights in 35 countries. Subjects range from Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize winner Oscar Arias Sánchez, and the Dalai Lama to virtually unknown human rights heroes in El Salvador, Cambodia and Belarus.

Pakistani human rights activist Hina Jilani's words are printed in bold print. "A human rights defender at the desk is only a reporter," she states. "A human rights defender in the field is a foot soldier. We are the only ones who will make a difference." Accompanying the text is a photo of Jilani and her sister Asma Jahangir—a portrait of resolute women with a peaceful light shining from their staunch gazes. Their work is fleshed out in a two-page narrative. The sisters have been under constant surveillance since 1996, risking their lives as advocates for women and children's rights and defending those who are targets for honor killings.

As the daughter of the late political activist Robert F. Kennedy, Kerry Kennedy's powerful connections helped catapult this effort into an international appeal for hope. Her influential ties cast attention onto the work of humble activists overlooked by mainstream media. Playwright Ariel Dorfman's rendition of the work currently travels throughout Europe accompanied by an exhibition of Adams' photography. The original cast included Sigourney Weaver, Kevin Kline and John Malkovich, and Bill Clinton hosted the play at the Kennedy Center shortly before he left office. Additionally, PBS broadcasted a documentary about the making of the theatrical performance.

Umbrage director Nan Richardson served as the book's editor. She oversaw the book's best-selling success and its snowball effect as a call to peaceful activism. "The power is in the voice and in the people's lives," she says. "The idea is to put people's rights in the center of discussion. This discussion comes at a time in our lives that our civil rights are being abdicated. It's a frightening thing for Americans to dream of America without civil rights. It's happening. The importance is never more pertinent."

Kennedy continues traveling as a human rights advocate. She will join Coretta Scott King in organizing related advocacy programs in the Atlanta school system this winter. "We have no money and no infrastructure, but we find a ways to cobble together sponsorship," Richardson says. "[Kennedy] has her father's spirit."

*Speak Truth to Power* is a primer for those doubtful that ordinary people are capable of extraordinary change. As Serbian activist Natasa Kandic shares, "Human rights are, in fact, the ultimate political question."

[www.speaktruth.org](http://www.speaktruth.org)

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